

TOP STORY: RICKIE SOLINGER ON THE NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

September 19 - October 2, 1994

IN THE SETTIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

THE BEAUTY MYTH

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DAVID MÖBERG REPORTS, PAGE 12

EDITORIAL

HILLARY IS THE PROPHET, CALIFORNIA IS THE TEST

Four months ago, Hillary Rodham Clinton told members of the Economics Club, an organization of business leaders in Washington, that if Congress didn't pass the administration's health care bill or a reasonable facsimile, there would soon be widespread demand for a Canadian-style single-payer plan. Implicit in her argument was that with the collapse of the administration's reform effort, the barrage of propaganda put out by the insurance industry and other special interest lobbyists would die down. Then the American people would be able to begin an informed discussion of real issues embodied in the various plans. Clinton predicted that under such a scenario, the demand for single-payer legislation would dominate the national debate. By the year 2000, she said, the United States would have a Canadian-style system.

Of course, Clinton was not advocating a single-payer plan. She was merely suggesting to her well-connected audience that prudence dictated adoption of a system that would protect their interests—the managed-care package she had helped develop.

And now we begin Hillary Rodham Clinton's nightmare. The Republicans in their wisdom have stonewalled the administration's compromises at every point and everyone seems to agree that health care reform is dead in this

Congress. Indeed, with expected Republican gains in November, especially in the Senate, it also appears doomed in the new Congress.

That may mean the end of the Clintons' attempts to force through their managed-competition proposal, but it also should lead to increased efforts by single-payer

advocates. Health care economists have already conceded that any savings that managed-care plans—such as HMOs and PPOs—currently bring to their members are due to hospitals shifting costs to individual insurance holders. As the *New York Times* reported recently, many economists now say that the advantages of managed competition “would largely disappear if everybody had managed-care coverage.”

Once the anti-big government propaganda dies down, Americans will have a chance to give serious consideration to the real issues of the health care debate: universal coverage, free

choice of providers and genuine cost control. And single-payer will be the only system that can withstand scrutiny. Single-payer is not a panacea, but by eliminating the administrative waste and profit of insurance companies, some 25 percent of current health care costs would disappear.

As Congress and big PAC money lobbyists fade from the picture, the focus of the debate is shifting to the states. In California, a genuine grass-roots campaign is being waged for Proposition 186, a single-payer initiative on the November ballot. The effort there has a real chance to transform the national debate on health care. Moreover, it is a democracy movement the likes of which has not been seen since the civil rights and anti-war movements of the '60s. Thousands of California citizens are now canvassing, organizing and training others to organize in an effort to thwart the expected insurance industry orgy of spending on TV commercials against single-payer.

An array of citizen groups, including major organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons, the League of Women Voters and the California Federation of Labor, have endorsed Proposition 186. (See the August 22 editorial for a more extensive listing.) And organizers report that many members of these groups, along with hundreds of other concerned Californians, are becoming actively engaged in the campaign.

Single-Payer Across the Nation (SPAN), a coalition of health care reform groups, is also mobilizing support for the California initiative outside the state. Meetings in cities throughout the South and Midwest are being held to raise money to help counter the insurance industry's media blitz and to recruit experienced organizers to go to California to help in the campaign. SPAN expects California's referendum to be just the first among several statewide referendums for single-payer. Colorado health care advocates, for example, are considering a referendum there for 1996. We urge you to join this campaign and to help in any way you can. ◀

For Information on developments in California, call Californians for Health Security (510) 653-6492 or Neighbor to Neighbor (415) 824-3355.

Note to readers: Joel Bleifuss is on paternity leave.

To scare the nation's elite, Hillary Clinton predicted that single-payer would sweep the nation if her health plan failed. Now California is taking up her challenge.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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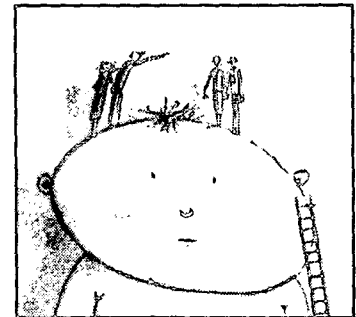
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LETTERS

Stereotyping?

Will Nixon, in his article "Relief disaster" (*ITT*, August 22), claims that the recent events in Rwanda "fulfill our stereotype of a dark continent ravaged by famine and slaughter." Nixon is in obvious error here, since the events in Rwanda cannot fulfill any stereotype about Africa any more than the slaughter in Bosnia fulfills our stereotype of Europe.

The same case could be made about Asia: Did the brutal slaughters in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Sikkim, Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, etc., (most of which are still ongoing) fulfill our stereotype of Asia as a continent ravaged by slaughter and famine? Did the Tiananmen Square massacre in China indict the whole of Asia from Turkey to the Philippines? Africa is a huge

land mass of some 12 million square miles (second in size to Asia). Its population is approximately 800 million—soon to be 1 billion.

The West seems to have invented a psychological assuaging profile of Africa to suit its own complexes and obsessions. In the case of Rwanda, consider the fact that it is, by African standards, a really small country of some 8 million people. Also bear in mind that "Tutsis" and Hutus" are groups artificially created by European colonizers who imported Eurocentric criteria with no relevance to the Rwandan people. Both groups speak the same language (the main criterion for ethnic differentiation in Africa), and they lived in the same communities for hundreds of years before the Europeans came in and brutally transformed social relations.

One must also be cautious in accepting the supposed figure of

600,000 people "slaughtered" in one month. It is difficult to see how machetes (usually used for agriculture) could do so much damage in such a short time. The Bosnian and South African conflicts relied on guns and bombs (much more efficient than machetes for killing) and lasted much longer than the Rwandan conflict, yet fewer than 50,000 have been killed in both cases.

In the case of Rwanda, do we have another instance of hidden ideological agendas driving statistics?

Amadu Diallo
Tucson, Ariz.

Dandy war?

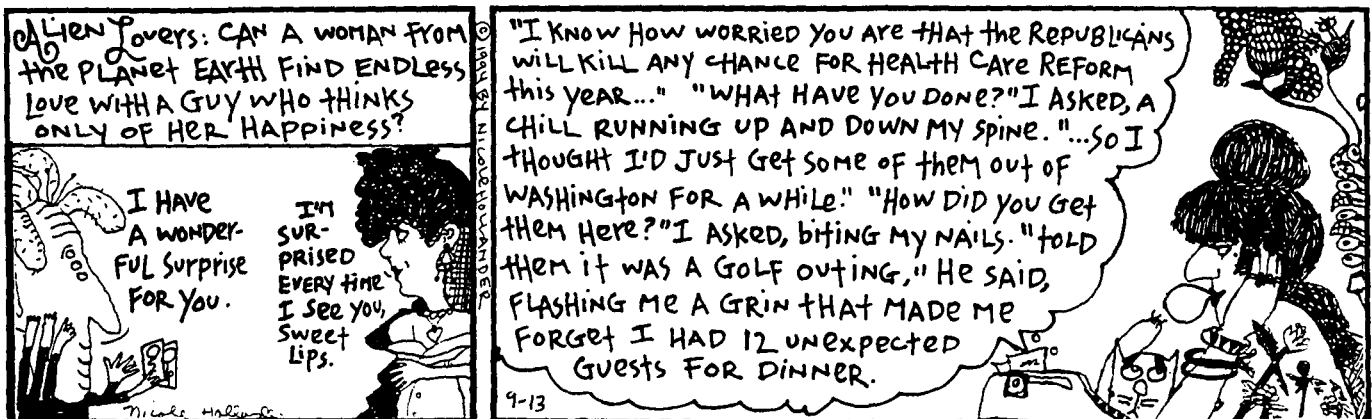
How I would like to believe the *ITT* conviction that an invasion of Haiti would result in a democracy unimpeded by military dominance, along with the restoration of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his rightful presidency. And just maybe this would be the first "good war" in history.

However, it is more important to look at the history of American invasions in the Caribbean, to look at the corporate interests that easily control American politics, to look at our president and where his interest is, and, of course, to look at why the right wing does not like the prospect of invasion.

Both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher boosted their popularity with

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



voters by the simple nationalistic maneuver of taking on a weak adversary under the guise of national interest. George Bush did the same thing with Desert Storm when his popularity peaked at about 90 percent—while the rest of us were classed as unpatriotic troop-haters.

Clinton and his advisers are not ignorant of the effect nationalism has on the polls, and maybe a dandy little war is all that's needed for the fall elections. Which explains why the Republican hawks are in opposition.

But, as an unyielding liberal, I'm still attracted to the *ITT* thesis—even if I don't believe it.

Stewart MacMillan
Guffin Bay, N.Y.

Tenure

I was appalled by your Appall-O-Meter item titled "Tenacious tenure" (*ITT*, August 8). It seems to imply that a New York teacher, Jay Dubner, was protected in criminal activity by tenure. You should be advised that tenure laws in most areas provide only the following protections:

1. Teachers may be dismissed only for cause.
2. Teachers are entitled to legal counsel.
3. A teacher is innocent until proven guilty.

Since you provide no details about Mr. Dubner's case, it is impossible to say how his tenure affects the charges against him, if at all. You should realize, however, that teachers are not unionists (labor laws do not allow them true collective bargaining power), nor are they professionals (they have little decision-making ability within their school systems).

Teachers are low-grade civil servants who work for the most obtuse and ignorant employers in America: local school boards. I taught in a non-tenure district at one time. Every spring, at contract time, we teachers faced a symbolic lynching party by parents who felt that the genius of their child was thwarted by ignorant

and lazy teachers. Of course, the tenure-as-protection argument could not apply.

Today, tenure protects teachers who are doing the best they can in spite of lack of supplies, overloaded classes, lack of support by librarians, counselors and deans, low pay, and public indifference. Don't add your sandbag to the operation.

Ken Abraham
Portola Valley, Calif.

Should, must and nowhere

The review "Survey says" (*ITT*, August 22) concerns a book that seems to deal predominantly with research. Surveys are not research. Surveys are so subject to either manipulation or poor designs, that the numerical results alone are practically meaningless.

If the review adequately represents *Tainted Truth: The Manipulation of Fact in America*, the author seems to have engaged in the type of deceptive research reporting that she deplores. Her statement about the results of a research project was: "In fact, as later emerged, one dog had died and the other had developed a large tumor." How many dogs were there? The statement implies two: "one" and "the other" one. According to information provided just prior to this statement, there were four dogs in the study.

The reviewer is critical of the author's proposed remedies as merely "a collection of shoulds." But all she has to offer in their place is a must: "...we must

conduct science in an arena free of any economic interests." The weakness of the author's shoulds and the reviewer's must is they lack reality. Either writer may as well have said, "We must [should] all be scrupulously honest." The author's "Researchers should insist on retaining some control over the way their studies are disseminated to the public" ignores the fact that if any researcher did so insist, there are plenty of replacement researchers who won't. The reviewer's "...we must conduct science in an arena free of economic interests" refers to an arena that probably exists nowhere on Earth and perhaps hasn't existed since just prior to Eve eating the apple.

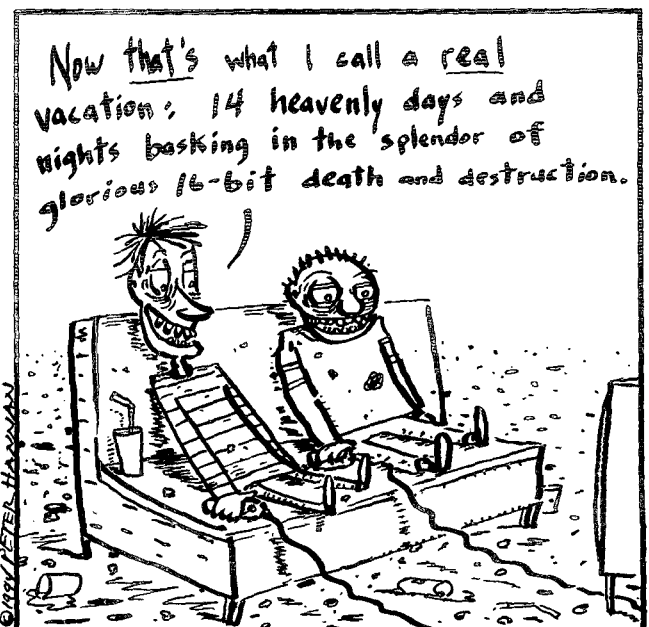
Incidentally, I am sure that it was lost on no one that the author is supported by the *Wall Street Journal*. Where, oh where, is that arena?

Ted M. Hopes
Glendale, Ariz.

Editor's note: A quick survey of the book reveals that the quote should have read "another" dog, not "the other" dog. One hundred percent of In These Times editors regret the error.

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



InSHORT

THE BEAT GOES ON IN CHICAGO

With Chicago selected as the site of the 1996 Democratic National Convention, city officials have been trying to downplay police misconduct. They would have people believe that the infamous beatings of the bloody 1968 convention are a thing of the distant past.

But police-watchdog groups say surprisingly little has changed since 1968. These groups maintain that officers accused of acts of police brutality in Chicago are rarely suspended, removed from their positions or otherwise disciplined.

As evidence, the groups cite the case of George Risper, a 14-year-old African-American who recently graduated from Seward Academy, a predominantly Hispanic school on Chicago's southwest side. Last March 31, Risper was attacked in front of the school by a young white police officer, according to roughly 20 witnesses. The officer's partner, also white, reportedly looked on and did nothing. Risper and his eighth-grade classmates were waiting for a bus to a school basketball game.

Nearly six months after the incident, nothing has been resolved. As *In These Times* went to press, the accused officers—identified as Michael Monaco and Stephen Cummings—were still on the beat in the same neighborhood.

According to one witness of the March 31 incident, Monaco told the boy, "Get out of here, you mother-fucking nigger. ... What are you doing in this neighborhood?" The officer continued to curse Risper, pushed him down and kicked him. Monaco and Cummings



By Woody Igou

Songs sung blue

The *Fortean Times* has collected reports from around the world illustrating the acute passions involved with karaoke singing. Patrons looked on in disbelief in a



Toronto sushi bar after a Vietnamese patron crooning "My Way" shot two members of the

audience for smirking at his singing. In a London suburb, karaoke singer Clinton Rowe attacked the disc jockey with a machete after being told that he could not sing one last song. In Bangkok, multimillionaire Chen Sek sang for three hours straight (including "Candle in the Wind" an excruciating four times). When another man timidly asked for the microphone, Mr. Sek had the rude fellow shot by his bodyguards. Said Mr. Sek: "We were carried away by the beauty of my voice."

Good luck touring your prison as the "Siren of Bangkok."

Intra-continental ballistic missile

According to an investigation done by Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), a federal agency's 1965 test of a nuclear-powered rocket produced a radioactive cloud that drifted

over Los Angeles before dissipating over the Pacific Ocean. Markey suggested that the area's residents were used as "human guinea pigs" in the experiment.



The cloud was a result of an "intentional accident" designed to

monitor the effects of a rocket malfunction. The release was "unlikely" to have caused illnesses, according to Markey.

At last, a purpose for Star Wars—self-protection.

Prussian blood rising

A German criminal court has been criticized for a lenient sentence handed down against far-right leader Gunter Deckert, according to the *New York Times*. Deckert was found guilty of publicly inciting racial hatred against Jews and publicly denying that the Holocaust took place.



The court's 67-page decision was replete with praise for the virtues of Mr. Deckert

and the impression he made at the trial. The court noted: "He is a strong-willed, responsible personality with clear principles who defends his political views with great dedication and a considerable expenditure of time and energy."

Sounds ... vaguely familiar.

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malignant cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Malalin mean
6. Gengrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Nosoperson of the Apocalypse

then left in their squad car.

Risper and his family, along with neighborhood residents and a wide range of police-watchdog groups, acted quickly, filing complaints with the police department's Office of Professional Standards (OPS) for what they believe was clearly a racially motivated hate crime. Risper and his family have also filed a civil suit, often the only way to recover damages in a police brutality case. And activists have brought the matter to the Illinois state's attorney's office, which has yet to decide whether to file any criminal charges against the officers, and to the U.S. Justice Department, which is actively investigating the case—though it, too, has yet to file charges.

The police department has sustained the family's complaint, meaning that it agrees there was wrongdoing. Yet despite assurances from the OPS that the case would be resolved by mid-June, no punishment has yet been announced.

"Basically, nothing has happened to resolve this matter," said George Bowers, the father of the alleged victim. "I am just asking for an apology to my son. But this cop could do this again to another kid. I just want someone to say to my child, 'This shouldn't have happened.'"

Mayor Richard M. Daley has declined to comment on the case. So have most other city officials, saying they can't talk about a case under investigation. And the story has received relatively little coverage in the Chicago media. Despite this official silence, community organizers, residents, students and teachers continue to work in support of George Risper. "Public pressure is the only reason this case has moved faster than most," said Mary Powers, executive director of Citizens Alert, a 27-year-old police-accountability organization. "Still, it's been a long time. Why hasn't the police department announced any decision on the matter?"

In recent years, more and more organizations around the country have been keeping an eye on police brutality and torture cases like those involving Rodney King, Malice Green in Detroit and the victims of Commander Jon Burge in Chicago. "There's a slow trend around the country to more civilian oversight, which could help prevent this type of incident," said Powers, who also plays a leading role in the National Coalition for Police Accountability. "These officers obviously needed more training and to be further evaluated before they went out into our neighborhoods."

—Dan Baron

SANCTUARY IN THE CHURCH

On a warm summer morning in suburban Berlin, the congregation of the Paul Gerhardt Parish begins the Sunday service with a hymn. The sound of organ music stirs Jose from his adjacent room, where the 19-year-old Angolan refugee has lived for the past three months. He attracts little notice as he joins the two dozen worshippers from the affluent church, taking a seat in the back row.

"The parish accepts Jose as our guest," says Lutheran Pastor Dieter Clausert, who has offered the spare room to different refugees over the past 10 years. "Even if his application for political asylum is rejected, he will have a safe place here until something else can be worked out."

The parish is one of more than 200 Protestant and Catholic churches in Germany that offer shelter to foreign refugees—even when that protection violates the law. Although German churches, particularly Protestant ones, have a

long tradition of providing sanctuary for persecuted persons, the new, more restrictive German immigration policy has brought "church asylum" into the spotlight and the involved parishes into conflict with the state.

The coordinated network of church initiatives is a response to Germany's recently amended constitutional right to political asylum, formerly the most liberal in Europe. Until last year, refugees had simply to make it to the German border and ask for an application for asylum in order to enter the country and receive housing and pocket money until their case came up before a court, often years later. Even if the applicant failed to qualify for political asylum, he or she was usually given permission to stay in Germany after years of waiting. Under the former laws, Germany accepted more foreign nationals every year than any other European country.

After a fierce debate, lawmakers finally voted to restrict and tighten the requirements for political asylum. Since the amendment went into effect one year ago, the number of foreign nationals admitted into Germany has sunk by well over half. The trial procedure has been streamlined and deportations dramatically stepped up. Refugees coming to Germany through a neighboring country, such as Poland or France, must apply for asylum there.

Critics argue that the priority of the new policy is simply to limit the number of foreign nationals entering Germany—not to give political asylum to those who really deserve it. Christian groups and human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, claim that legitimately persecuted people and refugees from war zones are being turned away from Germany to face life-threatening situations in their homelands. Young men from Angola, deserters from the Serbian army and Kurds from Turkey, for example, rarely qualify for asylum under the new laws. Should the courts rule against them, they are incarcerated and shortly thereafter deported.

As of yet, there have been no raids on churches harboring illegal refugees. Church organizers acknowledge that religious institutions are not above secular law and that police have full access to church premises at all times. But should Pastor Jürgen Quandt of Berlin's Holy Cross Church be confronted with the dilemma of breaking the state law or that of God, his decision is clear: "There is a law for Christians, a law of conscience, that may not correspond to the letter of state law. In cases where basic human rights are at stake, there is a higher moral covenant to which I am bound."

—Paul Hockenos

A STEP BACKWARD FOR CYPRUS

American policy-makers like to describe Turkey as "the West's rampart in Southwest Asia" and a "bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism." But such characterizations have been thrown into question by the appointment of Mumtaz Soysal as Turkey's new foreign minister. Soysal is a nationalist who supports Saddam Hussein and opposed Turkish involvement in the alliance against Iraq. He has demanded the withdrawal from Turkey of U.S. forces that protect the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq.

Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller was apparently forced to accept Soysal's appointment or see her coalition partner pull out of the government. The appointment amazed many Turks but was welcomed by the extreme

MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Calm and courageous

The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), the national program distributor for public TV, is only enhancing its reputation for genteel timidity under the leadership of ex-Federal Communications Commissioner Ervin Duggan. For instance, the human rights news show *Rights and Wrongs*, hosted by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, has been rejected repeatedly for national distribution. Hunter-Gault has stopped trying to be gracious about it. "Why is it that others who are not white and male can't find some place in the universe of public television?" she asked the *Los Angeles Times*.

The *Rights and Wrongs* fracas is only one of several embarrassing programming controversies at PBS. After receiving some flak for airing the dramatic series *Tales of the City*, which explored gay lifestyles, PBS abruptly pulled its commitment to a sequel. And a public TV-funded special on AIDS and African-Americans, *Red Hot and Cool: Stolen Moments*, has gotten a thumbs down because, as a PBSer told *Variety*, it had the wrong mix of performance and commentary.

No wonder journalists had a lot of tough questions for Duggan during the annual unveiling of PBS' fall television season. Yet despite all the controversy, the PBS president extolled the virtues of tranquility: "The marvelous story about pub-

the television," he said, "is not that the culture wars swirl about our heads every day, but that we live so resolutely, courageously and calmly amidst that crossfire."

I want my MTV designer socks

Ever since MTV—the first all-commercial channel—debuted, it's been about selling products that convey teen attitude (shoes, hair gel, jewelry) as well as selling the music. MTV takes credit for promoting the trend in pre-ripped jeans, for instance. So it's almost surprising that it's taken more than a decade for the MTV networks to launch their very own home shopping shows.

One of those programs, *Beavis & Butt-Head Mega Model Jam*, brings the animated characters' spirit ("it sucks") to home shopping salesmanship. Beavis and Butt-Head are expanding the culture of home shopping beyond the stereotype of lonely downscale housewives; they are giving it an air of alienation, a frisson of snickering resentment. Finally, it's cool to home shop.

The next generation will come fully prepared. Kids' channel Nickelodeon (part of the MTV empire) is also cultivating its own home shopping shows, including one that sells fashions based on outfits worn on the sitcom reruns *Nick* depends on to fill out its schedule.

The biggest obstacle to date is that millions of youngsters do not have their own credit cards yet. The Fingerhut company, a powerhouse among direct marketers, may issue an MTV credit card.

© 1994 Pat Aufderheide

right-wing nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist parties.

Soysal's appointment is bad news for Cyprus, which Turkey invaded in 1974, occupying the northern two-fifths of the island and aggravating tensions between the Greek majority and Turkish minority. In 1983, Turkish Cypriots unilaterally declared the establishment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus—an entity that no government has recognized except for Turkey. Despite many international efforts to reunite the island, the standoff remains.

Soysal is a leading opponent of any compromise on the Cyprus issue. He and other "no-solutionists" believe the status quo will be accepted if progress is blocked long enough. For years Soysal advised the intransigent Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash on delaying tactics. Soysal's predecessor in the foreign ministry had recently cooperated in U.S. efforts to extract concessions from Denktash before foreign aid for Turkey came up for a congressional vote.

U.N. peacekeeping forces have been on Cyprus since 1964—and the need to withdraw these troops for service elsewhere led to a sustained effort in 1992 to achieve a settlement. A U.N. plan providing for autonomous areas in a federal state was reluctantly accepted by Greek Cypriots and welcomed by Turkish Cypriot opposition parties, but rejected by Denktash. Under the plan, Turkish Cypriots, just 18 percent of the population, would get 28.2 percent of the territory; Greek Cypriots would get the rest.

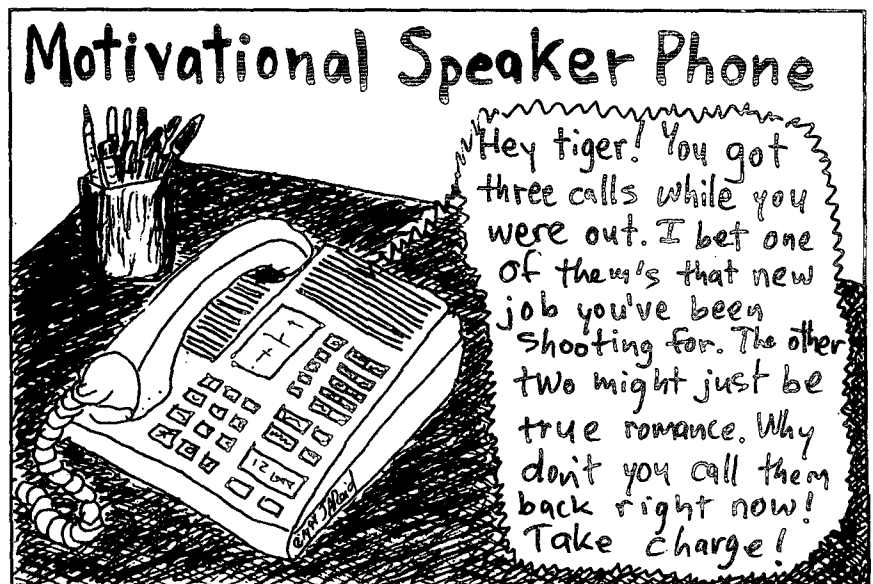
In hopes of easing the stalemate, the U.N. turned to confidence-building measures. Two of the measures, put into final form in March, offer advantages for both communities by opening part of the eastern seaport of Famagusta for resettlement and "bicommunal contact and commerce," and by reopening the airport in Nicosia.

Greek Cypriots agreed to the measures, but Denktash rejected them and demanded more concessions from the Greek Cypriots instead. The U.N. had planned to resume efforts on these measures, but the Turkish Cypriot assembly voted in late August to revoke its earlier resolutions approving negotiations on a federation. The appointment of Soysal and the political instability in Turkey will not make the U.N.'s work any easier.

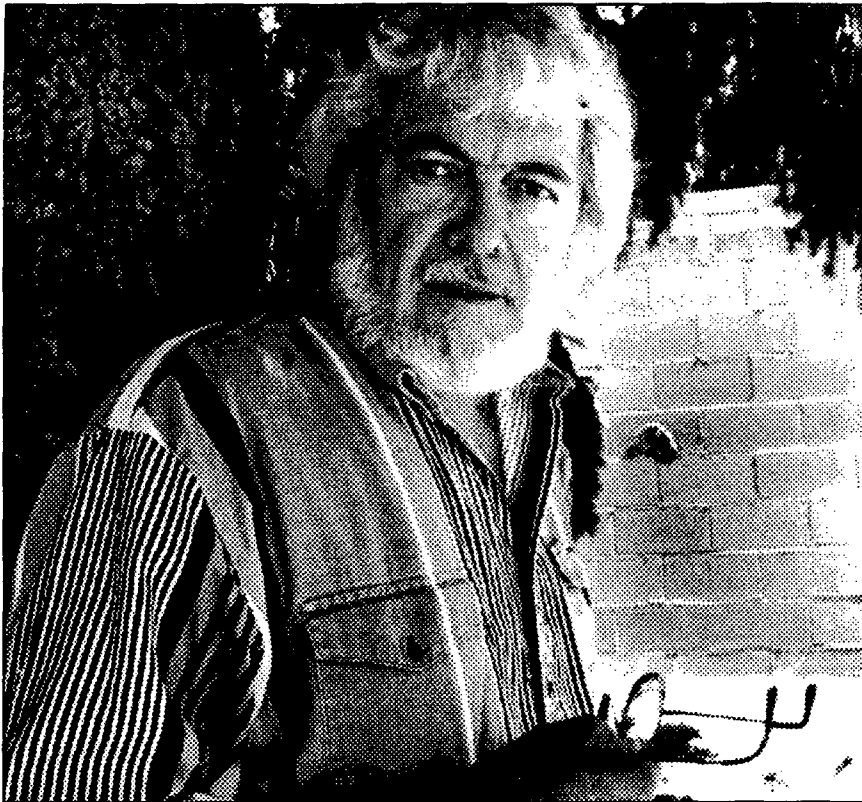
—A. Rice

ROUGH CUTS

By JA Reid



I N P E R S O N



THE GREENING OF NEW MEXICO

Roberto Mondragon aims to be the nation's first Green Party governor

Mexico Green Party's first-ever candidate for governor, leans back in his chair and offers a *dicho*, a traditional Hispanic folk-saying.

"*Arbol que crece torcido nunca su rama endereza*," he says, and then translates with a soft accent: "As the twig is bent, so shall the tree grow." In a state where native Hispanic, American Indian and Anglo populations coexist with a more recent influx of big money ranchers, New Age devotees and vacationing executives, adaptation seems to be the name of the game. According to Mondragon, New Mexico, which routinely elects Democrats, is tired of politics as usual.

"We happen to be at a time in the state of New Mexico that people feel the need for change, to get away from the established way of doing things," says the 53-year-old Mondragon. His Green candidacy, announced June 11 in Santa Fe, has quickly garnered national attention and is being seen as a litmus test for progressive third-party politics in the United States.

Much of Mondragon's electoral viability stems from his experience as a

On a hot spring morning in Santa Fe, N.M., on a street hidden away from summertime tourist traffic, Roberto Mondragon sits by an open window in his small office. In one corner, a fax machine wheels a steady scroll of paper into the already cluttered room. Mondragon, who is the New

ETC.

By Anastasia McRae

Have a nice spray

Some international airline flights may be toxic. According to a survey by the State Department, about 25 countries and territories currently require the spraying of insecticides inside the cabins of flights from the United States. In most cases, the spraying is done with the passengers still on board as the aircraft nears its descent. A key ingredient in the aircraft insecticide is also used in Black Knight Roach Killer, according to a report in *Buzzworm's Earth Journal*. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) points out that a warning on Black Knight cans tells consumers to "avoid breathing; avoid contact with skin and eyes."

Transportation Secretary Federico Peña is trying to get other countries to stop spraying while passengers and crew are aboard the planes. "But until we can accomplish that," Peña said at a recent press conference, "we will publicize the names of those countries that require spraying and draft rulemaking to see that passengers are informed when they book flights." The proposed rule would require U.S. and foreign airlines and their agents—including travel agents—to inform passengers if a flight to another country will be sprayed while the passengers are on board. The rule would require that passengers be told of the spraying at the time they book their flights.

The United States banned the spraying of passengers on domestic airlines 15 years ago when the Center for Disease Control found that the practice was not effective in pre-

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venting the spread of insects or disease. But the armed forces still routinely spray passengers aboard military aircraft with the insecticides when they return from overseas locations. Among the countries that require spraying of commercial flights are Antigua, Argentina, Belize, Costa Rica, Granada, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, New Caledonia and Trinidad and Tobago.

Buying gridlock

Health care reform "has become the most heavily lobbied legislative initiative in recent U.S. history," according to Charles Lewis of the Center for Public Integrity (CPI), a Washington-based good-government group. A recent CPI report shows that hundreds of special interest organizations combined have spent over \$100 million to influence the outcome of this issue.

The report notes that from 1993 through the first quarter of 1994 members of Congress received \$25 million in political contributions from organizations with health care interests.

The CPI notes that in addition to lobbying and political contributions interest groups are also using a large amount of TV advertising in the health care debate. The Health Insurance Association of America and its member organizations dished out an estimated \$15 million to produce the successful "Harry and Louise" commercials. The advertisements, according to the CPI report, "were single-handedly responsible for a 20-point drop in public opinion regarding the Clinton plan."

one-time Democratic leader in New Mexico. Between 1966 and 1985, Mondragon worked in the state legislature, directed state agencies on housing and aging, and served as lieutenant governor for two terms under his current opponent, incumbent governor Bruce King.

After a nine-year electoral hiatus—devoted largely to developing bilingual educational materials—Mondragon made a somewhat unexpected return to the political arena, jumping parties to join the Greens in June. Mondragon is quick to note his disillusionment with the Democrats. "The way the political system has evolved, it doesn't matter which party you're in, you still have to be a millionaire to run for office," he says.

Mondragon's political background is helping the Green movement to transcend its tree-hugging reputation, while his rapport with the Hispanic community seems to aid him in siphoning votes from both major parties.

"We're not trying to be extreme to the point where we might have only the support of one group of voters, but rather we're being practical, recognizing that there are many more issues than environmental issues," says Mondragon. "We're looking at family and education issues, and the need for core values. We're hoping that our efforts will change a lot of attitudes."

Using "value-based politics" as its catchphrase, the 28-page New Mexico Green Party platform calls for substantive reform, including campaign spending caps and term limits, federal deficit reduction without "deep cuts" in domestic spending, and a single-payer health care system. Also proposed is a 50 percent reduction in federal defense spending, cancellation of ongoing nuclear waste projects in New Mexico and the development of a stringent state energy policy. The platform further supports gay and lesbian rights, Native American sovereignty and a "zero tolerance" approach to violence in schools.

With unpublished polls by the major parties showing the three gubernatorial aspirants within 10 percentage points of one another and a full 30 percent of New Mexico voters still undecided, Mondragon is giving his opponents—Gov. King and Republican business leader Gary Johnson—a run for their money. In fact, he's raised Democratic hackles enough so that in July a group of prominent King supporters unsuccessfully petitioned the New Mexico Supreme Court to force the Green Party's slate of candidates off the ballot on an election law technicality. According to political analyst Roger Morris, this move not only embarrassed the King campaign but, ironically, provided the Greens with a crucial week or two of free high-profile publicity.

Says Morris, a columnist for New Mexico's Sunmount syndicate, "There's not a revolutionary movement developing in New Mexico, but there is a real sense that both of the old parties have failed us. It's like having to choose between a bad headache and a toothache. Mondragon may really benefit from the stench that's rising from the old-party candidates. He's much more than a token third-party candidate."

While it's likely that Mondragon will remain an underdog—particularly financially—right through to election time, he and a growing band of Green supporters remain committed to making third-party politics a competitive option in New Mexico. "We are bringing people together," says Mondragon. "We want to set an example for the rest of the country, so they too can realize that we're not limited to one animal with two heads, which is what we have in effect with the two-party system. We have to come up with an alternative, which is what we're offering with the Green Party."

—Sara Corbett

B U S I N E S S

Skin deep

A

nita Roddick is no garden-variety multinational corporate chieftain. A fast-talking woman with a passion for unorthodox business philosophies, Roddick is the 52-year-old founder of the Body Shop. Started in 1976 as a small store in Brighton, England, the Body Shop is now a cosmetics manufacturer worth \$675 million with a network of 1,100 shops—mainly franchises—in 45 countries.

Roddick's empire is unusual because she built it by promoting her company as the epitome of progressive values—selling natural products, protecting the environment, opposing cruelty to animals, using ingredients from threatened Third World communities, and creating an ethically inspired and enriching workplace.

She uses Body Shop outlets to advance the cam-

paigns of organizations such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace. She attacks the rest of the cosmetics industry for perpetuating beauty myths. And by linking her own ebullient personality with the corporation's identity, she appeals to the post-feminist, New Age woman consumer who wants both business power and a "natural" feminine beauty. She also taps into the uncharted but apparently expansive market of consumers who want values as well as value in the products they buy.

Roddick's fusion of social mission and business has made her "the spokesperson extraordinaire for this idea of socially responsible business," says Steve Schueth, a vice president with the Calvert Group, a socially responsible investment house. A few years ago another social investment firm, Franklin Research and Development, called the Body Shop "one of the most socially responsible companies in the world."

Roddick's work with the Body Shop has also catapulted her into the ranks of left heroines. Roddick, for example, is a director of

the Foundation for National Progress, which publishes *Mother Jones*. While presenting Roddick with Citizen Action's 1994 Citizen Leadership Award, the consumer group's president, Ira Arlook, called her "an outstanding embodiment of the values we all share."

Yet the image of the Body Shop, despite Roddick's energetic promotion and some legitimate accomplishments, is in many ways false and misleading. The Body Shop has not only failed to live up to the lofty claims that Roddick makes, but it has also exploited the desire of millions of customers to believe that a company can do good while doing well financially.

Roddick has been a key inspiration for a network of socially responsible businesses, investment firms and individuals who hope that private enterprises can be made a force for good. Consequently, if her work seems fraudulent, "it will fuel people on the left who think business can't be socially responsible and people on the right who feel business shouldn't be socially responsible," argues Simon Billenness of Franklin Research, which sold its 50,000 Body Shop shares in mid-July.

There's clearly a "positive marketing value" in appearing socially and environmentally conscious, acknowledges Gary Hirshberg, president of yogurt-making Stonyfield Farms and chair of the Social Venture Network, an organization of socially conscious firms. "That is why it's so vulnerable to exploitation." If consumers become aware of such exploitation, they are likely to become more cynical about any social claims that businesses make.

When the Body Shop began it put little stress on politics. It instead appealed to a desire for naturalness and simplicity.

***The Body Shop
doesn't deserve
its image as
"one of the
most socially
responsible
companies in
the world."***

By David Moberg



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Roddick, in her autobiography, *Body and Soul*, portrays the Body Shop style—from simple bottles that could be refilled to a folksy shop atmosphere—as improvisations out of impoverished necessity. She was simply trying to start a small business that could support her and two small children while her husband, Gordon, rode across the Americas on horseback.

Yet Roddick's initial product offerings, shop atmosphere and packaging style very closely duplicated an earlier group of cosmetics stores in the San Francisco Bay area also called the Body Shop. Although it is quite likely Roddick would have run across the stores during her visit to California in 1971, she denies appropriating the idea. She later bought the rights to the name from the California owners for \$3.5 million in 1987.

It was not until 1985 that she began using the network of shops as a political vehicle, linking up with Greenpeace for environmental campaigns. From that beginning Roddick saw politics as part of a distinctive marketing strategy. "Our environmental campaigning raised the profile of the company considerably, attracted a great deal of media attention and brought more potential customers into our shops," she wrote in her autobiography. "On that basis alone it could be justified as a sensible commercial decision." Such campaigns also motivated workers, a boon to Roddick the businesswoman as well as Roddick the social philosopher, who imagines businesses becoming "incubators of the human spirit."

Roddick's salty colloquialisms—"I bloody hate the beauty industry"—reinforce her oft-repeated claims that she is, unlike most cosmetics makers, an honest businessperson. "I, honest to God, didn't know you were allowed to tell lies," she said while accepting the Citizen Action award. But she appears to have learned early the value of shading the truth.

Consider, first of all, the company's products. Body Shop literature describes them as "naturally based," and most have names that trumpet natural ingredients: Kiwi Fruit Lip Balm, Mango Body Butter, fresh fruit soaps, Fuzzy Peach bath and shower gel, Watermelon Sunblock.

Yet critics maintain that Body Shop products are no more natural than most cosmetics. "Their formulations aren't anything special, nothing unique to the cosmetic world," says Paula Begoun, consumer advocate and author of *Don't Go to the Cosmetics Counter Without Me*. "They might take an herb or plant from a foreign country. Does that do anything special for the skin? A little natural is what they focus on, but a lot of their ingredients are not so natural." Those include preservatives such as 2-bromo-nitropane-3-diol—which, as Begoun notes, releases formaldehyde, a possible carcinogen.

And while Body Shop literature claims a particular hair gel is based on a southern Ethiopian tradition of using ochre, butter and acacia gum, "every single ingredient in it is petrochemical," argues Debra Dadd-Redalia, author of two environmental consumer guides. "There is no ochre, butter or acacia." Dadd-Redalia rejects the Body Shop's claims of

naturalness. "I would say there is virtually no difference in the safety or environmental friendliness of the Body Shop ingredients from any major cosmetic company [product] sold in department stores, except that they've added a few ingredients that are natural, like banana, that are a small part of the product."

Despite the image of natural purity, Body Shop products have often failed quality tests conducted by outside groups. The German environmental organization Oeko-Test reported earlier this year on a test of a wide range of skin creams. It classed the Body Shop's representative product—Carrot Moisture Cream—"not recommended" because of the presence of formaldehyde. According to a 1993 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) report, the Body Shop recalled one product processed in its North Carolina factory because a private lab found high levels of microbial contamination. FDA officials told the Body Shop that its quality control samples were not representative, that its consumer complaints were handled inconsistently, and that the factory made numerous errors in cleaning equipment, recordkeeping and following up on failed samples. And the December issue of *Consumer Reports* magazine ranked the Body Shop's Dewberry last among 66 women's fragrances reviewed, giving it the only "fair" rating of the whole lot.

The Body Shop has also finessed its position on animal testing, a hot issue in the industry. Before 1989 the Body Shop said its products were "not tested on animals." That year the company modified its claim, saying simply that it was "against animal testing." Yet in 1990 a court in Dusseldorf, Germany, fined the Body Shop for misleading advertising—prohibiting the company from running ads suggesting that its animal-testing stance and environmental policies were more enlightened than those of its competitors.

Nearly all ingredients used in the cosmetics industry have been tested on animals at one time or another. And in recent years there has been a sharp decline in animal testing throughout the industry. The strictest standard, followed by many companies appealing to the "cruelty free" market, rejects using any product tested on animals after a particular date. The Body Shop adopts a lesser, "rolling" standard, rejecting only materials tested on animals within the past five years. For that reason the Body Shop is not on the approved list of the German animal protection group, Tierschutzbund.

The Body Shop has exploited the animal-testing issue, organizing write-in campaigns through its stores. Yet according to investigations by British journalists, the Body Shop launched its campaign against a European Union ini-

tiative to increase animal testing only after a cosmetics industry organization—to which the Body Shop did not belong—lobbied heavily against it and after the directive had been withdrawn. Later the Body Shop claimed credit for the reversal in a leaflet proclaiming, "We've Won."

In recent years, the Body Shop has gained extremely valuable publicity from its "Trade Not Aid" program, which promotes products from tribal and peasant cultures. In purchasing these products, Body Shop customers not only get an intriguing whiff of Third World exoticism, but they also get the impression that they are helping endangered tribal people and saving the rainforest. In recent years, other organizations—from Oxfam or Cultural Survival to Ben & Jerry's, with their Rainforest Crunch ice cream—have promoted fair trade with tribal societies, but none has been more aggressive in touting their own company's involvement.

But the Body Shop's record on "fair trade" is spotty at best. One of Roddick's higher profile campaigns involves the purchase of Brazil nut oil from the Kayapo Indians of central Brazil. The Kayapo began fighting incursions of loggers, miners and settlers into their territory in the early '70s. In 1989, under the leadership of Paulinho Payakan, the Kayapo organized a pan-Indian protest at the Brazilian frontier town of Altamira against plans by the Brazilian government and the World Bank to build dams throughout the Amazon region. Roddick, along with the rock star Sting and a large contingent of reporters, showed up to express support for the Kayapo, who had shrewdly figured out how to ally with environmentalists to advance their own aims.

Soon after the Altamira protest, Roddick hired a former employee of the Brazilian government's controversial Indian Service to manage operations in two Kayapo villages. The Kayapo would gather the nuts, extract the oil with a manual press, and ship it by airplane to the Body Shop. The Body Shop promoted its Brazil Nut Hair Con-



ditioner with dramatic photo displays about the Kayapo and suggestions that the income provided an alternative to destroying the rainforest.

Yet the meager income from the Body Shop has never provided a real alternative to the revenue the Kayapo earn from signing contracts with logging and mining corporations. And there has been little communal control over the Brazil nut oil project. Villagers have come to resent the Body Shop manager's control over the project and its money, says Terry Turner, a University of Chicago anthropology professor who has worked with the Kayapo since the '60s. According to Turner, tensions over the project exacerbated

“It was my view unions were only needed when the management were bastards,” wrote Roddick. By that standard, some would say that the Body Shop needs a union.

was the public relations that the Body Shop got from being associated with the Kayapo, and Payakan in particular. So they weren't interested in ensuring that the project would not be used by his immediate family as a base of communal domination.” Turner is particularly critical of the Body Shop's slogan, Trade Not Aid, since it is the absence of any government aid for health, education or other services that has driven the Kayapo to contract with loggers and miners. “The message of that ad and other things they've said is this is the way to go, green capitalism,” Turner says. “But these projects don't bring in enough income to substitute for government services.”

The main value of the Kayapo to the Body Shop is the publicity they provide, not the relatively small quantity of Brazil nut oil they supply. For example, the Body Shop continues to trumpet a proposed intellectual agreement with the Kayapo, which was first announced in May 1993. Nearly a year and a half later there is no agreement but lots of favorable publicity.

Thus the Body Shop has moved quickly when its Kayapo project has threatened to generate unfavorable press. After Payakan was charged with the 1992 rape of a Brazilian woman—a charge Turner believes is untrue—and other Kayapo were attacked for living lavishly off the proceeds of logging, Gordon Roddick flew to Brazil, warning that the Body Shop would not expand its Trade not Aid purchases until the Kayapo reformed.

Despite these problems, Roddick uses her Trade Not Aid projects as a moral platform. At a meeting last winter of the International Chamber of Commerce in Cancun, Mexico, Roddick excoriated assembled executives for trading with the “torturers and despots” who rule China. But even now the company “continues to sell large quantities of baskets made in China,” says Richard Adams,

internal tribal conflicts. In theory the money earned—estimated at about \$50,000 a year at one village—could help the Kayapo with medicine and other needs. But because of the centralized control of the project, much of the money has gone to a few Kayapo leaders and their supporters.

“The Body Shop set the whole thing up because they wanted to use Payakan as a symbol of the Body Shop,” Turner says. “The point of the project

director of the British group New Consumer. For the past decade, Adams, a former admirer of the Body Shop, says he has tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Roddicks to purchase their shops' basketware from community-based cooperatives in Africa, Bangladesh and India. But, according to Adams, “the thing more important than anything else to the Body Shop was price.”

The Body Shop also sells body scrub mitts made by Nahnu women in the Mexican province of Hidalgo. The money is an important supplement for the women, whose husbands are often far away working in the United States or on agricultural plantations. But the Body Shop tried hard to negotiate a lower pay rate for the women. And for two years it refused to make advance payments, even though that was essential for the impoverished women to produce a stock of mitts, according to Peter Winkel, coordinator of Xochipilli, an alternative trading organization that works with the villagers.

Overall, New Consumer's Adams concludes, “much of the Body Shop approach to obtaining materials and products from Third World producer sources and working with them is superficial. They buy very little. They give small orders without following through.” The Body Shop makes grand claims for fair trade on the basis of very small purchases. Adams notes that Brazil nut oil constitutes only about 1 percent of the ingredients in Body Shop products that contain it. Yet even a large portion of its Brazil nut oil comes from regular commercial sources, not from the Kayapo or other indigenous people. Adams estimates that less than a fraction of 1 percent of all Body Shop materials are from Trade Not Aid sources. But there's no way to know: the Body Shop refused to provide information on sources. And so New Consumer has recently downgraded its once high rating of the Body Shop.

The Body Shop promotes environmental values as strongly as social responsibility. Yet its claims appear to have little substance. David Brook, a former Environmental Protection Agency lawyer, thought he had the “opportunity of a lifetime to come into a ‘green corporation’ and start from scratch” when he was hired in 1991 as the company's first manager of environmental affairs in the United States. “It was too good to be true, and it was,” he says. “The reality I encountered was no different from other corporations that said they wanted to do things and didn't. I was in a department without a budget. I couldn't do anything without approval of the president, and the president didn't approve much of anything. When push came to shove, every idea got dumped in favor of manufacturing or quick purchase decisions.”

“Their manufacturing operation was handled in a way that was irresponsible,” Brook maintains. “They didn't spill a million gallons of oil in the bay, but they're not a big company. Give them a chance and they would have.” From 1989 to 1992, when its U.S. factory was in New Jersey, the Body Shop was cited three times by the local sewage authority for illegally discharging materials into the public sewer system.

Brook says that despite his position he was not informed of the spills. Later, in 1993, the company moved its U.S. headquarters to North Carolina, taking advantage of lax environmental regulations, cheap land and low-cost labor.

Angered as much at the way the Body Shop treated its employees as its environmental record, Brook resigned in 1992. "They've been able to perpetrate a lot of lies," he says. "I haven't seen a shred of evidence they've done anything in this environment that's progressive."

Of course, Roddick remains an inspiration to many Body Shop employees, and some company policies, such as child care and spousal abuse counseling, are worker-friendly. But Roddick does not seem anxious to grant workers real power. "It was my view unions were only needed when the management were bastards," she wrote in *Body and Soul*. By that standard, some would say the Body Shop needs a union.

"The company just treated people like crap," says Brook, now a deputy attorney general for the state of New Jersey. "There were so many people who were incredibly vivacious, enthusiastic and naive. They embraced the philosophy in such amazing ways and worked their butts off. Yet the company didn't give a damn about them. Anita would say, 'speak out, question authority, make the company do things we say we do,' and they would do that and get fired. ... The people who ran the place were extremely ruthless. They have the image of a great extended family. It wasn't, or else it was one great dysfunctional family. At the time of the move, they just 'displaced' people, because they could hire people cheaper down there [in North Carolina]. What kind of company is ... that?"

There have been related problems with franchise owners. The Small Business Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives has been examining practices of many franchise vendors, including the Body Shop. According to a spokesman for chairman John LaFalce (D-NY), the committee is concerned that many claims made to potential Body Shop franchise owners are untrue or violate Federal Trade Commission guidelines. "You've got the leader of socially responsible business—which is desperately needed—doing the lowest common denominator" in dealings with franchisees, the spokesman said.

Many critics charge that the Body Shop is no better—or worse—than many businesses within an often exploitative franchise industry. As in many other companies, critics argue, Body Shop franchisees are ill-informed or misled about their prospects for success and unwittingly become captives of the parent corporation. They risk their own money but have little control over the business.

Larry Benes and his wife, Stacey, operated a Body Shop franchise from 1991 to 1993 in Charlottesville, Va. Both had been successful in business—computers and real estate—but wanted to do something different. Though their store's sales grew quickly, they lost money. The Body Shop—which controls store siting—refused to help them relocate to a more promising location. "They have total

control," Larry Benes said. "You have basically no control over pricing, no control over cost, no control over rent. You put up your \$300,000 to \$350,000, and the only thing you can determine is whether you work 80 or 120 hours a week."

The duplicity in the Body Shop business even extends to the Roddicks' own charity. The Body Shop Foundation does contribute to worthy causes, although many of the expenditures support the Body Shop's Trade Not Aid activity—and thus indirectly the business itself. And much of the foundation's money doesn't even come from the Roddicks. In the fiscal year ending in February 1993, \$1.5 million of the foundation's \$1.75 million in donations came from British entrepreneur Richard Branson (with only about \$37,000 from the wealthy Roddicks).

The Body Shop has blocked some critical press coverage with threats of libel suits, a particularly effective strategy in England, where libel law is weighted more heavily against journalists than in the United States. But the bad news has been leaking out nonetheless. It has led to soul-searching within the ranks of socially conscious investors and businesses. Some, like Stonyfield's Hirshberg, think that businesses with social aims should be more modest in their claims and that their goal should be continuous improvement, not matching some fixed standard. "The fact that consumers seem willing to pay more and be more loyal to companies that they perceive as doing the right thing gives all the more reason for all of us to protect the [market] niche or, less cynically, to advance the cause."

Billeness of Franklin Research says that social investors have to reassess what constitutes "due diligence," or sufficient research on companies' social claims. Although various groups have proposed standards of social responsibility, there is a need for a consistent method of evaluating companies.

"People want to believe that companies like this exist," Billeness said, referring to the once pristine image of the Body Shop. "I think they do. The question is: is the Body Shop one of them?"

Journalist Jon Entine, who has exhaustively researched the Body Shop and recently published an article about the company in *Business Ethics* magazine, argues that its problems go much deeper than a few misleading PR campaigns. "The issue is not that Anita Roddick has broken promises but that she's broken a trust," he said. "It's an immoral company that has lied from the beginning. What she's doing is exploiting people's innocence and idealism. She's a liberal demagogue."

Some companies clearly are better for workers, consumers and the environment than others. But it still takes the pressures of vigorous, independent forces—unions, consumer groups, government, the press—to watch and challenge any business, even one that parades as a paragon of leftist virtue and claims, as the Body Shop does, that its charter is "changing the world." A high-minded fraud is, in the long run, more damaging than a person, or a company, of modest virtue. ◀



Baby love

R

Fertility treatments are expensive, risky and often ineffective. Yet banning them would be a setback for women.

By Rickie Solinger

ports of technological breakthroughs in reproductive technologies have tended to focus on the sensational and the singular: on the putative grotesqueries of post-menopausal pregnancies; and on surrogacy cases, which are invariably transformed into melodrama, described as if gender, class and sometimes race exploitation were not at their heart. The media trendsetter, of course, was the "Baby M" case, reported as if it were about one lowdown, unstable and insufficiently maternal female welching on the good-faith deal she made with a proper middle-class couple—lacking only a baby in their quest for perfection.

The media dishes out these tales of perversity with relish; but the big impact of the new technologies is on the lives of ordinary women, hundreds of thou-

sands of them, who have participated in fertility-enhancing programs in recent years. These women, who for one reason or another are apparently unable to conceive in the usual way, undergo treatments ranging from IUI (intra-uterine insemination) to egg harvesting, embryo implantation, embryo and egg freezing, the micro-injection of sperm and the micro-manipulation of ova.

Lately there has been a great deal of controversy among feminists, most often expressed in heated political terms, about the broader implications of such treatments. Such discussion generally proceeds as if it is possible to embrace or reject any given modality of procreation for straightforwardly political reasons.

But, in this arena as in so many others, the personal is always threatening to trump the political—in ways that might be familiar, say, to progressives who feel compelled to go to extraordinary expense and other inconveniences in order to raise their children in a safe neighborhood with good schools, despite their commitment to improving the lot of all

children in society. In a capitalist society, it is the rare individual who foregoes on principle the chance to buy what one values—in this instance motherhood—if one has the resources, even when it takes a special effort to fit an essentially personal choice into a deeply held politics of justice.

And so, to begin with, I'd better identify my own reproductive history: I have two biological children conceived through intercourse. It may also be relevant that I have a close relative deeply enmeshed in the full array of new reproductive technology treatments. I say this because I have the feeling that readers of this kind of article are, like me, always sleuthing the subtext. Is the writer herself a mother? And if so, what kind? A biological mother? An adoptive mother? A technologically assisted mother? Or is she a voluntarily child-free person?

The differences between those supporting and those opposing the new technologies is stark. Those who oppose them insist that the new technologies constitute a new form of violence against women, alienating them from their reproductive processes, reducing them to what critic Janice Raymond, author of *Women as Wombs*, calls "experimental raw material" or "womb environments." Supporters, such as Carol Sternhell, director of women's studies at New York University, argue that the technologies can be potentially liberating for women. "All the new alternative forms of family building are ... challenges to our culture's dominant ideas about family," Sternhell suggests.

Raymond and the other critics can draw upon a great deal of history to back up their opposition to the new technologies. One need only recall the horrifying examples of thalidomide and the Dalkon Shield to prove that real danger

can lurk in the heart of technology's promise to women desperate to manage their fertility. And it is clear that technologically assisted conception has been overhyped. The statistics are terrible, yet desperate women keep coming, a fact suggesting that the customers are actually being duped and even coerced into undergoing treatments that are not only physically risky but often futile.

Equally troublingly, the new technologies use up vast social and financial resources that could potentially be better spent solving existing problems such as high infant mortality rates in some parts of the United States and around the globe. (In the United States alone, fertility clinics do \$2 billion of business a year.) And the technologies pose tougher issues for the ethicists. They mandate a "normalcy" standard for fetuses: all participants in the programs have the right to demand perfect babies, so fetuses that fail the test will be selectively eliminated.

In addition, the mere existence of the new technologies creates new worldwide inequities. The procedures are terribly expensive: *in vitro* fertilization, for example, costs \$10,000 or more. And so there are multiple new opportunities for exploitation, both of women desperate to be pregnant and of poor women who, out of an extreme lack of resources, can be pressed into service as egg donors or so-called surrogate mothers.

The new technologies, Raymond suggests, are dangerous to women and to feminism because they take power and control over fertility away from desperate women and hand it over to doctors and technicians who manage and profit from the infertility empire. "Women as a class have a stake in reclaiming the female body," Raymond argues, "by refusing to yield control of it to men, to the fetus, to the state, and most recently to those liberals who advocate that women control our bodies by giving up control."

Given this house of horrors (and the sci-fi scenarios anyone can conjure up, based on what seems to be possible and acceptable in the realm of reproduction today), the theorists believe that the only effective check on the evils inherent in the new technologies is a curiously "liberal" one—that the state must outlaw the whole business on the grounds that these technologies are necessarily used in ways that are unethical, dangerous for women, costly and out of sync with the common good.

While the feminists who categorically oppose the new technologies are a relatively homogeneous group, those who support them share no common analysis or creed. No single ideology fits the diverse perspectives of researchers, doctors, business types and participants in fertility programs. And, of course, the doctors and technicians who develop and deliver the new technologies and the average women who buys them may or may not identify with feminism in any form.

While Raymond and her colleagues concentrate on the big picture, the supporters of the new technologies focus on the rights of individual women. They may sometimes have the less powerful argument, medically and politically. But I am struck by their references to the sheer number of women

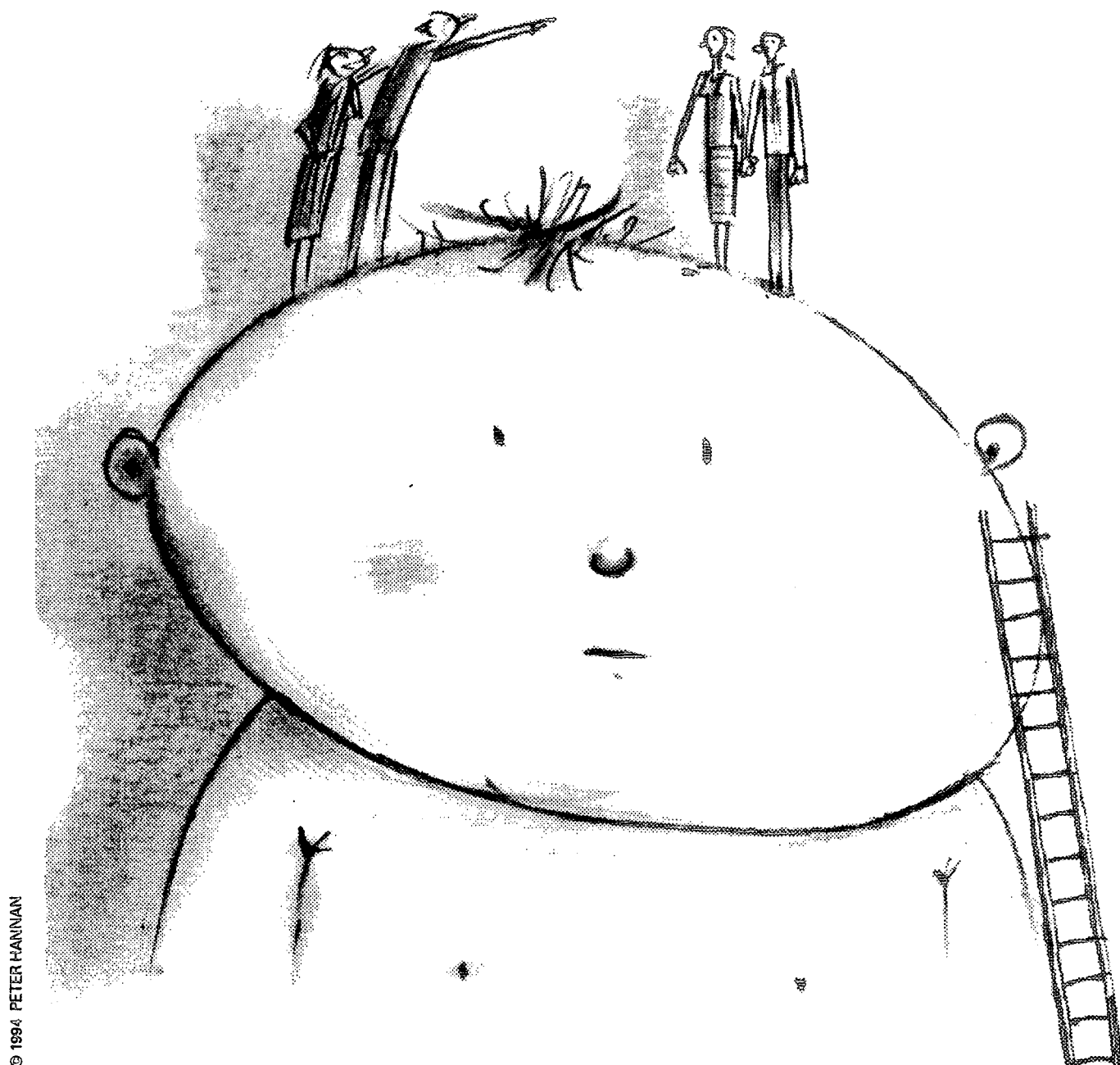
moving through infertility programs—women ready to make sacrifices and take risks simply to be able to give birth. In some ways, their desire for control over their own reproductive capacities is not all that different than that of the countless women who sought abortions even when a large measure of social opprobrium was attached to women trying to determine their fate that way.

The woman entering a fertility program simply wants to be a mother, probably in pretty much the same way that most other women, feminist or not, want to be mothers. She wants to be a mother so badly (maybe partly because of the cultural mandate that presses women into motherhood, partly because motherhood seems so genuinely, emotionally grand) that even though she knows something about the lousy stats, the painful procedures, the possible risks, she enrolls in an fertility program anyway, glad to have the *choice* to do so, and glad to have the resources to pay for it. The odds tell her there is a good chance that at the end of the process she will be frustrated, disgusted, depressed and much poorer—though not necessarily sorry she tried everything she could.

This woman may also see herself as a feminist, someone who cares about ethics and justice and issues of equity. She simply wants her life to meet her expectations, and having a baby is a key expectation. And so she justifies her participation in the program on roughly the same principles as her like-minded friends when they explain why they choose to live in safe neighborhoods or send their children to private schools or colleges or why they use so much of their disposable income to pay for summer vacations instead of, let's say, sending all their excess dollars to organizations devoted to ending world hunger.

What's more—and this is the most painful part—she doesn't believe it is her personal responsibility to engage in orphan-saving just because she or her partner is infertile, or lesbian, any more than it is the responsibility of the lawyer couple next door with one conventionally conceived 6-year-old and tons of money. She is concerned about the high infant mortality rate in the United States and abroad, but she doesn't see how her forbearance from participating in a fertility-enhancing program will reduce the rate of infant deaths. She doesn't believe that her infertility or her sexual orientation requires her to redress this particular human problem. She herself would find paying another woman to be a "surrogate mother" repugnant and unacceptable. Like the theorists, she assumes that the state should have a role in this arena, but for her, the much more limited role of regulator is sufficient.

Given the competition between the logic of the opponents of reproductive technology and the strength of the desire of unwillingly childless women to become pregnant, how does one formulate a position regarding the new technologies? Surely we have to find a position that allows us to reject the medico-cultural mandates that rigidly define infertility as a disease requiring a medical "cure" and that leaves it to the infertility establishment alone to define what is and



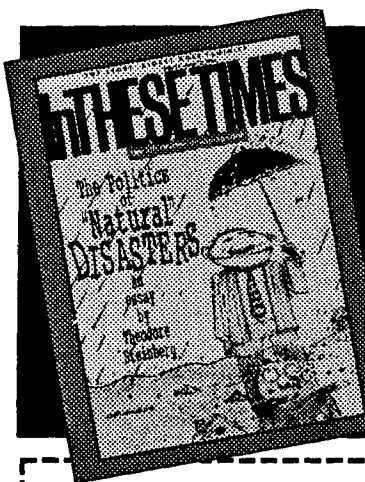
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is not a legitimate mode of procreation. And certainly we must insist that the possibility of male infertility be equally scrutinized in each case where appropriate, and treated accordingly.

Just as important, we need to evaluate the controversy between the supporters and the opponents of the new technologies in light of what we know about the politics of parental worthiness in the United States at the end of the 20th century and the enduring race and class biases that continue to shape these politics. Specifically, it would not do

to consider the politics of fertility without attention to the fact that the new technologies can contribute, on the one hand, to the enduring anxiety about poor and non-white women who have "too many" children and must have their fertility controlled, while, on the other hand, it drums up sympathetic concern for "deserving" white middle-class women beset by infertility problems who must be given the chance to enhance their child-bearing possibilities.

These issues cut to the heart of gender and class politics in this era. Together with the politics of abortion and wel-



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fare of which they are a part, they define the huge, problematic terrain in which many women now live, a terrain substantially unreconstructed after 20 years in which feminist politics has had an impact on many facets of our national life.

And yet, to construct a meaningful position with regard to the new technologies, one must listen carefully to the voices of women who use them. We must ask why women keep on seeking out and undergoing fertility treatments, despite the poor statistics and the political implications.

And it would be best if we could imagine that these legions of women filing into burgeoning infertility programs around the country are just like those of us who conceived in the old-fashioned way. They've sized up the options, and they've sized up their hearts, realizing that the costs (emotional, financial, medical and political) of the new technologies—like the costs of living through one's child's adolescence or paying for a child's college education—are very high. But no one can tell them—or me—that it's not worth it. Nor, in the end, does it seem fair to me to impose a demographic politics of justice on the backs of women who simply want the same thing that I got without even trying. ◀

Rickie Solinger is a visiting scholar at the University of Colorado. She is the author of *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe v. Wade* (Routledge) and *The Abortionist: A Woman Against the Law* (The Free Press).

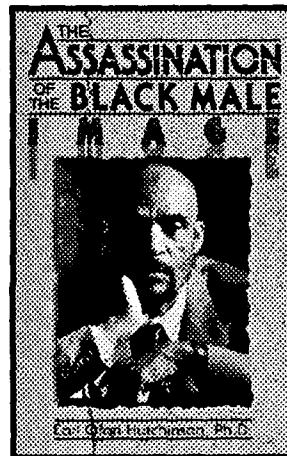
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POLITICS

Jesse, run?

***Jesse Jackson
is threatening
to challenge
Bill Clinton—
perhaps as a
third-party
candidate.***

By Salim Muwakkil

The Rev. Jesse Jackson recently informed President Clinton that he is seriously considering an electoral challenge in 1996 because of the incumbent's lack of commitment to progressive policies. This warning was significant because it was Jackson's sharpest criticism yet of the administration. But what made it particularly noteworthy was Jackson's threat to mount a campaign outside of the Democratic Party.

"Return to the course that drew our support," Jackson warned Clinton, "or prepare to face either a primary challenge or a run as an independent to open up the process." Speaking to a friendly crowd at the Chicago headquarters of Operation PUSH, the head of the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC) said an independent campaign may be necessary "because now in this two-lane highway,

labor, civil rights, urban America and family farmers have no bargaining power."

Jackson's stringent critique followed the Clinton administration's triumphalist response to the passage of a \$30 billion crime bill featuring mandatory minimum sentences and 58 new ways to earn the death penalty. (See *In These Times*, August 22.) The struggle over that piece of legislation revealed the extent to which conservative perspectives now frame domestic policy debates—especially debates over crime and punishment. The Clinton administration has done little to adjust that perspective, and thus the regressive presumptions of the Reagan-Bush era have become even further entrenched.

"There is something wrong with a system that leaves vast bodies of people unemployed, unskilled and without hope," he said. Invoking the liberatory rhetoric of the civil rights movement, Jackson told the PUSH crowd: "Our only abiding principle is fairness, openness and hope. We are foremost freedom fighters with a commitment more to democracy than Democrats, more

to the republic than the Republicans."

Talk of an independent campaign has tantalized Jackson's supporters and others who long have urged the former civil rights leader to sever his ties to the Democrats. He has resisted those urgings in the past because, he said, the Democrats offered the best chance to effect the most change. But his resistance is getting weaker. "The issue of blind allegiance to a party is foolish," said Jackson. Especially after being "blindsided by a party with the assumption that we have nowhere to go and to be taken for granted. That party is over."

Despite the defiant rhetoric, many observers argue that Jackson is simply jockeying for political space within the party. "He's been out of the headlines for a bit too long," says a journalist who's covered Jackson for many years. "And for someone like Jesse, headline-deprivation is a serious ailment that can only be cured by intensive media coverage." By dropping hints about his independent presidential ambitions, Jackson is sure to attract the media's attention.

Jackson's bitter reproach of the Clinton administration is seen by some as piling on. The embattled Clinton presidency already is listing from the right's incessant barrage of accusations and innuendo, they argue, and Jackson's broadsides from the left are doing nothing but weakening the only opposition to the Republican government-in-waiting.

Jackson disagrees with that analysis and is quick to note his bona fides as a loyal, hard-working Democrat. "I've campaigned harder than just about anyone to get Bill Clinton elected and I've worked real hard to support this administration," he declared. "I've traveled to more states than anyone else in the cabinet. I've registered

more voters than any other Democratic leader, so I've earned my right to criticize."

Directly after Clinton's 1992 victory, Jackson's NRC convened an eclectic conference of advocacy groups, union leaders, elected officials and civil rights veterans to chart a list of priorities for the new president and to devise criteria to gauge accountability. In descending order of importance the list of priorities included: jobs and economic development; health care reform; low-income housing construction; statehood for Washington, D.C.; education reform; compassionate welfare reform; and a more active Africa policy. The theme of that conference was "promises made, promises kept."

Referring to that list, Jackson said Clinton's promises for a change "have been unfulfilled and abandoned and in urban America there is great pain. Plants closing, boarded houses, vacant lots—and children are offered jails and electric chairs as opposed to jobs and education." He charged that Clinton lacked "a plan, a policy, a budget and the attitude" to implement policies designed to address the list of priorities. "Promises made, promises broken," Jackson concluded.

Such developments are not surprising to James Jennings, professor of political science and director of the William Monroe Trotter Institute of the University of Massachusetts at Boston. For many years, Jennings, who has written several books on black politics, has been urging African-American organizers to build an independent political power base. Without such a base, he has argued, African-Americans are unable to affect the programs adopted by the White House or to hold the president accountable.

Rather than bargaining with Clinton for personal access and black personalities in the cabinet, Jennings says, African-Americans should have been organizing an autonomous political base with a well-developed platform and clear methods of ensuring accountability. Jennings welcomes Jackson's talk of an independent campaign, but he's not convinced that Jackson is serious about the effort.

And one of Jackson's top political strategists thinks an independent run might prove futile. "I agree with Jesse's criticism of Clinton, but I'm not so sure about the strategy of an independent campaign," says William Strickland, an author and assistant professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. "Our fight is to develop an alternative voice inside of the Democratic Party, something to act as an antidote to the influence of

the DLC [Democratic Leadership Council]."

Strickland says an independent run would waste too much valuable time. "If Jesse waits until '96 to run as an independent, it will be too late to do any real political education and the Republicans—possibly Oliver North—will win the election. Jesse would then be seen as a spoiler." He recalls that Ross Perot's entry into the race was the only thing that prevented a 1992 Republican victory. "Remember, Clinton received only 39 percent of the white vote compared to George Bush's 41 percent," he notes. For all of his contradictions, Clinton is all that stands between us and some of the crudest forces of reaction."

Strickland believes a primary challenge by Jackson would serve as a vehicle for political education and help initiate a real political debate on the country's direction. "There's no political debate in this country," he says. "The only voice in town is the voice of the right-wing reaction, and it has convinced a lot of working people that their enemies are really their friends. We need to debunk those notions on a national stage—and a primary campaign can do that."

Clinton's current weakness in the popularity polls is sparking much discussion on additional primary challenges. Speculation is rife that Sen. Bob Kerrey of Nebraska will challenge the troubled incumbent. Political insiders note that a major Democratic contributor,

Chicago commodities broker Richard Dennis, is urging former Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts to jump into the primary fray. Former governor and two-time presidential candidate Edmund Brown Jr. is also making noises about a Clinton challenge.

But all of that could change if the president's poll numbers improve. Ironically, an impending Jackson challenge may help serve that purpose. Clinton has benefited in the past from public tiffs with the mercurial NRC chief. When candidate Clinton criticized rap performer Sister Souljah at an NRC-sponsored event, he symbolically distanced himself from the Jackson mystique. His approval rating among whites improved significantly soon thereafter.

Some of Jackson's close associates argue that he will ultimately resist another candidacy for fear of fueling the public perception of him as a perennial candidate and thus as a target of ridicule. But without Jackson's compelling presence on the national stage there is no articulate challenge to the right-wing status quo. A Jackson challenge would pack more of a political wallop were it to come from within the Democratic Party. But the job of organizing an independent power base remains to be done. ◀



MEXICO

Front line

*A grass-roots
political
organization
is building
democracy on
a small-town
scale.*

By James North
TLACOLULA, MEXICO

In 1983, a young sociology teacher returned to his hometown of Tlacolula, Mexico, to start a political opposition movement. Like just about everywhere else in Mexico, this market town of 25,000 was ruled by a combination of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and apathy—few people even bothered to vote in the uncontested elections.

But Carlos Ignacio Aguilar Castellanos had come home at the right time. By the early '80s, the terrible depression linked to the foreign debt crisis had started to bite deeply. The government announced it would impose new taxes, but Tlacolulans complained that the local, corrupt PRI aristocracy had provided few services. Manuel Luis Hernandez, then a law student, remembers: "The roads weren't paved; the drainage was inadequate;

the schools were on double shifts. We had big public meetings, and we told them we would not pay."

Within a few short years, the Tlacolula Democratic Front had won a big following, contending for political power in the Town Hall. The PRI fought back with vote fraud and even violence.

The town is still highly politicized, to the point where some parents prohibit their children from dating young people from the opposition camp, and many Tlacolulans will buy goods in the marketplace only from their political allies. Grass-roots organizing has become so specialized that even the women who sell *chicharron* (dried pork rind) in the market have their own group, and they show up with their banner at Front rallies.

Today, there is an uneasy political stalemate in Tlacolula. The mayor is a PRI-ista, but the Front has genuine influence in town affairs through its aldermen. In the recent national elections, the Front, which is allied with the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), won about 1,700 votes, compared with 2,000 for the PRI. (See accompanying story on page 24.)

Other groups like the Front are growing in at least 35 other towns here in the Oaxaca Valley, 300 miles southeast of Mexico City, and in other parts of the country. Like many grass-roots organizations throughout the Third World, the Front is trying to construct "civil society"—democratic social and political structures—as a counterweight to repressive and indifferent governments. The Front's ups and downs over the past decade show on a small-town scale how difficult it can be to build a genuine independent opposition.

Today, the law student Manuel Luis Hernandez is a qualified lawyer—and the administrator of Tlacolula's Water Board. Six of the town's 13 *regidores*, or aldermen, are Front members, and the organization has a voice in municipal appointments. In the polarized town even the water supply is the subject of a political dispute. Hernandez says that in one neighborhood PRI stalwarts are trying to claim that they built the local well themselves, and they are charging four to five times the official rate for potable water. "But in fact, the government constructed the system, so the PRI-istas have no right," he says. "I'm trying to settle this peacefully, through negotiation."

But violence has been a persistent part of the Tlacolula story. In 1985, a 35-year-old Front activist was murdered after he called the PRI mayor a liar in a public meeting. The actual killer was convicted and imprisoned, but the Front says those who gave the orders to kill him remain unpunished.

On other occasions, several hundred police were sent out

from Oaxaca, the state capital. "We rang the bells of the church and fired off skyrockets to call our people to confront the police," Hernandez recalls. "Hundreds of our supporters came to the central plaza. Some of them threw stones at the police, and even fired some of the skyrockets right at them."

"The vote of fear"

As evidence of fraud in Mexico's August 21 election continues to surface, much of the country seems in a sour but resigned mood. Even the supposed winners are not especially happy; the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—which officially won just under 50 percent of the vote—has sponsored no victory rallies of any size.

The center-left opposition, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which officially finished third with 17 percent, has staged some protest rallies across the country. But the August 27 demonstration in Oaxaca—as with PRD protests in other Mexican cities—fizzled, attracting at best a thousand people to the central plaza. The rhetoric was tired, and the event was enlivened only briefly by burning effigies of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the current PRI president, and Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, the next one.

The opposition has now begun to concede that the PRI probably did win on election day, even if by a margin much lower than the official total. Heberto Castillo, one of the most respected PRD leaders, has already publicly admitted defeat, even though his party continues to maintain that no one can legitimately claim victory until the avalanche of fraud charges is investigated.

The search for explanations for the PRI victory is already well under way. One obvious starting point is the lack of separation between the ruling party and the state. Make no mistake: if the elections had taken place in Eastern Europe in the '80s under the supervision of a Communist Party that used state programs as election tools and drained millions from the national budget for campaign funds, the U.S. government and mainstream media would not have rushed to endorse the vote as free and fair. The PRI's domination of TV coverage—and to a lesser extent the print media—also played a vital role in the ruling party's success. But quite possibly the most important reason the PRI won is that it received what people here call "the vote of fear." In a limited sense, there was an undeniable fear of actual violence: The Zapatistas rose in the state of Chiapas this January; and the PRI's first presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, was assassinated in March.

But "fear" had a much larger meaning. Mexican voters also feared the economic consequences of a PRI defeat. Investors removed approximately \$11 billion from Mexico in the months just after the Zapatista uprising. And commentators in both the United States and Mexico regularly predicted that the world financial community would respond poorly to a victory by PRD candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. Since 1988, when Salinas took office, Western businesses—mainly from the United States—have poured some \$50 billion in new investment into the country. In exchange for that investment, Salinas gave the Western banks and corporations what they had long wanted—an economy wholly open to trade and investment.

Ernesto Zedillo, the PRI's winning candidate, is—like his predecessor—another bland technocrat. But he was smart enough to give all his first post-election interviews to the mainstream U.S. press, making reassuring noises for the Western financial community. While the PRI's coddling of Western investors has mainly helped the well-off, others have also benefited.

Although the number of Mexicans living in "extreme poverty" swelled from 4.3 million to 6.5 million between 1984 and 1988, poverty in the cities has declined somewhat since Salinas took office. Even in the worse-off rural areas, new PRI government anti-poverty programs—although run from the top down—have at least given the impression that some recovery is under way. Though annual GNP growth is at an anemic 2.2 percent, that feels like positive change to Mexicans who lived through the depression of the '80s.

The Front has also used passive resistance tactics. After the town's 1989 mayoral race, when the Front insisted its candidate had been denied victory through electoral fraud, the group's supporters sat in at the Town Hall for months. "For the next three years, there were two town governments," Hernandez explains. "Our supporters went to our

government to get various permits and licenses, and their supporters went to theirs."

Though local PRI officials have been forced to accept some of the Front's gains, they continue to use traditional tactics to frustrate the opposition. During the recent elections, the Front had many of its supporters working in polling places. But Hernandez insists there was still fraud. He contends, consistent with complaints from all over Mexico, that the list of eligible voters was shaved of some Front supporters.

But the PRI is not the Front's only obstacle. The conservative opposition, the National Action Party (PAN), has no real presence in Tlaxcala. But its candidate, Diego Fernández de Cavallos, did well in the presidential debate in May, which the television networks—despite their pro-PRI bias—had to show in its entirety. The PAN's vote in Tlaxcala shot up to between 300 and 400. Historically, the PAN has gotten only 50 votes or so.

Hernandez promises that the Front will take an active part in the national post-election protest wave called for by PRD candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

"We will hold work stoppages; maybe our people in the market will close up on certain days," Hernandez says. "Our supporters among the teachers—there are two factions—will stop work for a day. And we will keep marching." ◀

James North is a freelance writer based in New York City.

—J.N.

FOREIGN POLICY

The evasion of Haiti

A

s the Clinton administration stumbles toward an invasion of Haiti, it is encumbered by two small problems. The people who are supposed to do the invading don't like the idea. And many of the people who are supposed to be saved by the attack aren't very enthusiastic, either.

A U.S. attack might not mean the ouster of the military—or the return of real democracy.

By John Canham-Clyne

Factional strife within the administration has spilled out into the press. The August 29 *New York Times*, for example, quoted "some administration officials" saying that an invasion "would not take place until after the Cuban crisis is resolved, and perhaps not until after the November elections in the United States." The next day, however, State Department spokesperson Michael McCurry denied the report, and Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott insisted that, "There is not just a sense of urgency but of increased urgency."

Talbott issued his statement from Kingston, Jamaica, where he had traveled with Deputy Defense Secretary John Deutch to gather support among Caribbean nations for the invasion. The trip—by the No. 2 officials of the State and Defense Departments, respectively—succeeded after a fashion. Barbados, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago pledged a total of 266 support troops to an invasion force expected to number 10,000. Back in Washington, Talbott declared that it was a foregone conclusion that U.S. troops would enter Haiti, whether as invaders or as part of an international peacekeeping force following an abdication by Haiti's commanding generals.

Nonetheless, *In These Times'* interviews with a number of U.S. officials and members of organizations familiar with the planning process reveal that the Pentagon, the State Department and the White House are at odds over the timing, nature and duration of an invasion. Moreover, these interviews show that the U.S. government continues to be deeply

suspicious of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the majority of the Haitian people whom he represents. Despite President Clinton's half-hearted rhetoric in support of Aristide, the U.S. government seems more concerned with preserving its historic links to Haiti's elite and military—and to corporations interested in exploiting the country's low-wage labor force—than with intervening on behalf of a popular democracy rooted in opposition to U.S. foreign policy goals.

No one expects that the Haitian military would offer serious resistance to American forces, although Haitian citizens would be at great risk during the actual invasion. The real questions have to do with the invasion's aftermath. What role would U.S. forces play? How quickly—and how much—authority would be turned over to President Aristide? What would be done with Haiti's murderous army and its paramilitary allies? Who would police the country?

These questions have slowed the planning process to a crawl. Officials in all agencies are obsessed with Aristide's alleged thirst for revenge and with the potential for popular violence by Lavalas, the popular movement associated with the ousted president. Many U.S. planners assume that the Haitian military would need protection from the Haitian people, not vice versa—despite the fact that the public is largely unarmed.

In focusing on the potential for revenge, U.S. officials are succumbing to their own propaganda. The only acts of retribution connected with Aristide's presidency were the several dozen deaths that took place during the popular defeat of an attempted coup in the interim between Aristide's 1991 election and inauguration. During his eight-month tenure, only four soldiers were lynched, and in each case, the public reacted to an immediate abuse committed by local military forces.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide

Yet one U.S. military official directly involved in planning the invasion fairly oozed contempt for Aristide when he argued that American soldiers could be sucked into fights between the public and the military, and themselves become the objects of popular anger. "What happens when Aristide decides he has to distance himself from the U.S., makes a speech, and the Lavalas spills over and some [Haitian soldier gets lynched] on CNN?" the official asked.

Both the Pentagon and the State Department are resisting suggestions that the Haitian military be disarmed and demobilized, and that the Aristide government rebuild it from scratch.

According to one senior administration official who requested anonymity, the U.S. military believes it could defeat the army within three days, but wants no part of policing the country after that. White House advisers hope to turn the policing job over to multinational peacekeepers who are supposed to replace the invasion force within a relatively short period of time. However, at least half of the planned multinational force is expected to be made up of U.S. troops.

The same official says that the State Department has been arguing for a solution similar to the one used in Panama following the 1989 U.S. invasion. Gen. Manuel Noriega and the senior commanders of the Panamanian Defense Forces were removed, but the rank and file were kept intact, renamed and "professionalized." (One of the key State Department planners for the Haiti invasion is Michael Kozak—who, as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs under President Bush, helped plan the Panama invasion.)

Such a solution would come as no surprise to Aristide supporters. A source close to the legitimate government says: "I don't think anyone's being fooled into thinking they aren't going to try to preserve the military. If one looks at El Salvador, even after the vaunted success of the Truth Commission [which documented widespread killing and torture of civilians by the armed forces], the military is still intact. If you look at Chile, or anywhere else, the bottom line is that the military institution has always been preserved."

Yet if the U.S. military is afraid of finding itself with a hostile populace on its hands, retraining the country's current military and police would almost certainly exacerbate



the fears of the Haitian people. Many Haitians already fear and mistrust the United States and understand that the current crisis has direct roots in Washington. The Haitian military was created by U.S. forces when they occupied Haiti between 1915 and 1934, and most of the Haitian officer corps is U.S.-trained. Several of its senior leaders are reportedly former or current CIA assets.

The popular organizations that form the backbone of Haiti's democratic civil society are under brutal assault

from the U.S.-trained military and police forces. This summer, the more visible pro-Aristide clerics have lost what little protection their collars once afforded them. In July, the Rev. Hugo Triest, a leading figure of the Haitian Conference of Religious People, narrowly avoided kidnapping and possibly assassination. He is now in deep hiding. Then, in August, a well-coordinated ambush by at least a half-dozen men pumped automatic weapons fire into a car driven by the Rev. Jean-Marie Vincent. Vincent was one of a small group of pro-Aristide priests with national stature as a result of years of work helping peasants organize themselves and creating a nationwide literacy program eventually suppressed by the military dictatorship.

Vincent had survived a machete wound received during a 1987 ambush, but this time took at least five bullets and died almost immediately. According to a Haitian expatriate who spoke with eyewitnesses, the local judge (Haitian judges double as preliminary investigators) and police, who often take hours to show up for emergency calls, arrived at the murder site within five minutes. Within 10 minutes, the body was gone, and the crime scene had been cleaned up quite professionally. The police refused to turn the body over to relatives, even following a request by the Papal Nuncio, until after the official "autopsy" had removed all the bullets, making it impossible to trace the ammunition.

"Haitians know their own history," says Dr. Paul Farmer, author of *The Uses of Haiti*. Farmer, an American physician and medical anthropologist, practices medicine in Do Kay, a small village in the central plateau. Farmer, speaking of the proposed invasion, says: "Haitians tell me, 'If you came to my house, spread your garbage all over my living room floor, and then left, I would certainly be justified in expecting you to come over and clean it up. But don't

expect me to be grateful.' ”

Indeed, despite increased violence against pro-Aristide forces, many of the country's popular organizations are resisting an invasion. In July, the Conference of Religious People, joined by several grass-roots groups, issued a declaration that was harshly critical of U.S. policy. The signatories included four of the nine members of the Platform of Human Rights Organizations, which has done impressive work documenting atrocities.

The document argues that loophole-riddled sanctions as well as duplicitous U.S. diplomacy have slowly constricted Aristide's political room for maneuver. The declaration—derided by the *New York Times* as a conspiracy theory—sees military intervention as another in a long series of U.S. moves to check the power of Haiti's majority in its own politics. “All this commotion about ‘multilateral’ (in fact, American) intervention, as well as the pretended putschist opposition, converge toward a single and unique goal—the very same that was set for the coup d'état of Sept. 30, 1991—to definitively block the way of the emergence of the people onto the political scene of their country,” the document states.

Even those Aristide supporters who favor the idea of an invasion have grave doubts about Washington's role. They point out that if the Clinton administration was serious about “restoring democracy” to Haiti, the United States would very quickly turn the country over to genuine popular organizations after the invasion. Coordinating such a transition would be extremely difficult, however, given the mistrust Haiti's real democrats feel for the United States. Moreover, U.S. planning in this area is hamstrung by its reliance on a network of contractors with ties to discredited U.S. programs to “enhance democracy” in Haiti.

The Office of Transition Initiatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) is planning a post-invasion local governance program. According to several participants in planning meetings, shortly after the invasion, 10 teams of three advisers would fan out across Haiti, identify local officials and popular leaders, and act as liaison, coordinator and communications conduit between the AID mission, the U.S. military and Haitian citizens.

AID and the National Endowment for Democracy have expended tens of millions of tax dollars on democracy initiatives in Haiti over the last decade. However, AID seems to have only the faintest idea of who comprises the popular movement. Previous AID attempts to create “moderate” democratic structures involved funding organizations headed by Jean-Jacques Honorat and Mark Bazin—the first two stooge prime ministers for the coup.

Lisa McGowan of the Development Group for Alternative Policies, a progressive public policy group, worries that the administration is not working hard enough to overcome an ingrained misunderstanding of Haiti's popular movement. Even granting the good intentions of AID, says McGowan, “they're still trying to create democracy in their own image. They want to support structures in Haiti that

they are comfortable with, not those created by and for the Haitian people in *their* own image.”

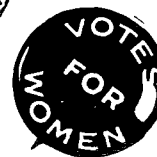
Haitians have every reason to believe that a U.S. invasion would be directed as much against the popular movement as against the coup leaders. But even assuming the best of intentions on President Clinton's part, the White House must cope with bureaucracies stuffed with the men and women who ran the Reagan-Bush wars in the region during the '80s.

Among some military officials in particular, the only person trusted less than Aristide is Bill Clinton. The military official directly involved in Haiti planning fumed about the fact that Clinton has publicly put the prestige of the United States on the line for Aristide. “During the '70s and '80s, I remember people like [administration officials] Mort Halperin and Strobe Talbott saying that you have to be nice to the Soviets, offer them everything under the sun, because they could be trusted,” said the official. “Now, these same people are in a big hurry to send U.S. troops off to Bosnia and Haiti.”

Nevertheless, the invasion has taken on a powerful domestic logic. A quick, easy win would enhance Clinton's public image, silence some of his conservative critics and distract attention from the disastrous failure of health care reform. As usual, the push and pull of Washington politics seems likely to be played out on the killing grounds of our impoverished neighbors, and paid for in the blood of poor people. ▲

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VIEWPOINT

Haiti's hidden history

By Robert Parry

On a Caribbean island, a bloody revolution has overthrown the old order and triggered alarms in Washington. Fearing that the radical uprising could threaten the economic stability of the American South, a newly inaugurated U.S. president secretly colludes with a powerful European dictator who will send an army to the Caribbean to crush the island revolt.

So began one of the least-known chapters of U.S. foreign policy, a clandestine plot so twisted that it could fit into a Robert Ludlum novel—except that the events occurred almost 200 years ago.

The story resonates today because the Caribbean country was Haiti and the president was Thomas Jefferson, the idol of the current White House occupant, William Jefferson Clinton. The European dictator was Napoleon Bonaparte of France. And the outcome changed, dramatically, not only the history of Haiti but the history of the United States, too.

Though nearly forgotten in the United States, the story of Jefferson's conspiracy to crush Haiti's black revolution remains a bitter memory to many of today's Haitian leaders. America's long-ago betrayal of Haiti's revolutionary hero, Toussaint L'Ouverture, feeds ousted President

Jean-Bertrand Aristide's lifelong distrust of Washington. It also inspires defiance among the Haitian generals who insist that the United States has no business lecturing Haiti about democracy.

"In Haiti, we became the first black independent country," Aristide recalled in an interview. "We understood, as we still understand, it wasn't easy for them—American, French and the others—to accept our independence."

Like the conflict between Serbs and Muslims in the Balkans, the current crisis in Haiti has roots in distant history. The tale of Thomas Jefferson and Haiti starts in the late 18th century, shortly after America had won its own independence from Great Britain.

Haiti, then known as St. Domingue, was perhaps the richest colony in the world. A French possession, covering the western third of the island of Hispaniola, it produced nearly one-half of the world's coffee and sugar. The colony's carefully cultivated plantations generated vast fortunes for imperial France.

But the human price was high. The French devised a fiendishly cruel and racist slave system that worked many Africans to death and subjected enslaved blacks to sadistic punishments.

When revolution swept France in 1789, the Jacobins' cry of "liberty, equality and fraternity" echoed with special force in St. Domingue. A slave rebellion, led by L'Ouverture, raged through the colony. In the fierce civil war, the slaves killed hundreds of French plantation owners and seized control of the island nation. Despite brutality on both sides, the rebels won the sympathy of the American Federalist Party and particularly Alexander Hamilton, a native of the Caribbean himself. Hamilton even helped L'Ouverture draft a constitution for the new nation.

L'Ouverture's fortunes turned, however, in 1801—when Jefferson became president and Napoleon Bonaparte consolidated his control of France. Besides expanding French power in Europe, Napoleon dreamt about rebuilding a French empire in the Americas. Napoleon's first step would be reconquering St. Domingue. The second would be the establishment of a French colony on the North American mainland, based in New Orleans. Napoleon had secretly obtained the vital Mississippi River trading city from Spain.

Jefferson had his own concerns about the violence in St. Domingue. An owner of 180 slaves himself, the third president dreaded the prospect of L'Ouverture's slave rebellion succeeding and inspiring uprisings on the plantations of America's South. "If something is not done, and soon done," he had written in 1797 about the potential spread of slave uprisings, "we shall be the murderers of our own children."

Jefferson's personal fears and political interests intersected in early 1801. Through secret diplomatic channels, Napoleon asked Jefferson if he would help a French army that would be sent by sea to St. Domingue to crush the slave rebellion. Jefferson replied that "nothing will be easier than to furnish your army and fleet with everything

and to reduce Toussaint [L'Ouverture] to starvation." Encouraged by Jefferson, Napoleon began preparations for the expeditionary force.

Then, in May 1801, Jefferson picked up the first hints of Napoleon's other agenda: the French takeover of New Orleans and the settlement of the vast Louisiana lands west of the Mississippi. Alarmed at that prospect, Jefferson backpedaled on his commitment to Napoleon, adopting a posture of neutrality. But Jefferson still took no action to block Napoleon's thrust into the New World.

In 1801, a French expeditionary force drove the slave army back into the mountains. But the ex-slaves first torched the cities and the plantations. Seeking to negotiate an end to the war and accepting Napoleon's promise that slavery would not continue, L'Ouverture turned himself in. But Napoleon broke his word and shipped L'Ouverture, in chains, to Europe where he soon died in prison.

Infuriated by the betrayal,

*Though ignored
by many in
Washington,
Haitian history
weighs heavily
on both Aristide
and his opponents.*

L'Ouverture's young generals resumed the war with a vengeance. In the months that followed, the slave army—aided by native diseases and the harsh terrain—annihilated the French army. A second French army was sent, and it, too, was destroyed. Napoleon, who had conquered much of Europe, lost 24,000 troops in St. Domingue before abandoning his campaign. The death toll among the slaves ran many times higher.

In 1804 Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the radical slave leader who replaced L'Ouverture, formally declared the nation's independence and returned it to its original Indian name: Haiti. A year later, apparently fearing a return of the French and a counterrevolution, Dessalines ordered the massacre of the remaining French whites on the island.

By 1808, having lost his planned base of operations in the Caribbean, Napoleon agreed to sell New Orleans and the Louisiana territories to Jefferson. Ironically, the Louisiana Purchase, made possible by the failure of the president's collaboration with Napoleon in Haiti, was considered by many to be Jefferson's greatest achievement as president. "By their long and bitter struggle for independence, St. Domingue's blacks were instrumental in allowing the United States to more than double the size of its territory," wrote Stanford University professor John Chester Miller in his book, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*. But "the decisive contribution made by the black freedom fighters ... went almost unnoticed by the Jeffersonian administration."

Instead, Jefferson imposed a stiff economic embargo on the island nation. The American hostility stunted Haiti's efforts at reconstruction and worsened the hardship for its people.

The loss of Toussaint L'Ouverture's inspired leadership might have been even a worse blow to Haiti, according to Jefferson scholar Paul Finkelman of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. "Had Toussaint lived, it's very likely that he would have remained in power long enough to put the nation on a firm footing, to establish an order of succession," said Finkelman in an interview. "The entire subsequent history of Haiti might have been very different."

For the scholars who have studied the issue, Haiti was a blemish on Jefferson's legacy as a historic voice for individual freedom. Finkelman thinks that Clinton, like most Americans, has no idea that his hero, Jefferson, contributed to Haiti's suffering. "I think Clinton loves the Jefferson that is in the Jefferson Memorial, a stone, mar-

ble figure," Finkelman said. "I don't think Clinton really knows much about the real Jefferson."

"There's a great deal of irony in all this. What Clinton is trying to be [in demanding democracy for Haiti] is Jeffersonian, and the problem with Thomas Jefferson was that he was not a very good Jeffersonian, particularly on questions of race and diplomacy in Haiti."

Even in his final years, Jefferson was obsessed with Haiti and its link to the issue of American slavery. In the 1820s, the former president proposed a scheme for taking away the children born to black slaves in the United States and shipping them to Haiti. In this way, Jefferson thought, both slavery and America's black population could be phased out. Eventually, Haiti would be all black and the United States all white.

Jefferson's strange idea was never taken very seriously and American slavery continued for another 40 years. It was not until 1862, during the American Civil War, that President Abraham Lincoln finally extended diplomatic recognition to Haiti. But by then, Haiti's destructive patterns of dictatorship and division were long established.

Robert Parry was the reporter on the PBS Frontline documentary "Showdown in Haiti," which was nominated for an Emmy award.



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I N T H E A R T S

"You can buy anything"

A

Five years after the fall of communism, two East European filmmakers offer dark views of life in a new world.

By Pat Dowell

Almost exactly five years ago Eastern Europe's communist bureaucracies began to crumble, to be replaced by a nerve-shattering crash course in unfettered capitalism. I was in Warsaw in the winter of the "shock treatment," and the lasting impression I have is of pirates on the loose.

One evening a burly Pole, recently returned from America, made conversation with me at the Holiday Inn's money-changing desk. Decked out in gold, and flashing a fat wad of dollars, he was jovial. He had come back to his homeland, he said with messianic zeal, to bring go-go dancing to Poland. The Poles would love his American dancers, he said, "especially the black ones."

I was in Warsaw for three months, and during that time the price of orange juice tripled, and you began to see people line

up on the most-traveled sidewalks to sell anything they had—even, on one memorable morning, a single cigarette, offered by an old man with nothing else to trade. Warsaw was like a terrible frontier boomtown, where everything was permissible, nothing within reach and no one accountable.

Poland led the way in 1989 for Eastern Europe, and Romania brought up the rear, with its confused and bloody coup that saw the execution, finally, of the capricious dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Ceausescu still haunts Romania, just as the certainties of the communist past hang over the precarious future the "market" has wrought for all these nations.

Such a situation is the perfect stuff of movies, and in Mircea Daneliuc's corrosive comedy *The Conjugal Bed*, it is Ceausescu's helicopter that hovers over Bucharest in 1992. The twisted, rusted ruins of the chopper in which he fled the national assembly are enshrined as a memorial by newly reverent citizens, who anxiously watch the skies to see if it takes flight again. This display of false

nostalgia disgusts the bedeviled hero of *The Conjugal Bed*. A middle-aged movie-theater manager, Vasile (Gheorghe Dinica, a distinguished actor in a brilliantly angry performance) is preoccupied with amassing enough dollars for his wife to have a sterile abortion and with keeping his mistress, the theater's statuesque ticket-taker Stela, happy and within reach.

The Bucharest air is full of market mantras—everyone talks of going into a "private business," and when Stela does, it's the oldest profession of all, explained by her slimy husband to tormented Vasile as "tourist guide." Meanwhile, the unemployed are on strike (only Vasile sees the joke of this), and even their picket line can be broken by news from the market: the price of cabbage has gone up, and everyone runs, in a classic Eastern Europe gag, to line up for the goods they will soon be unable to afford.

As the title suggests, writer-director Daneliuc aims for the most intimate marketplace of all. Unable to raise money for an abortion for his wife Carolina, Vasile demands that she induce an abortion with primitive means: hot baths, jumping off furniture, etc. Later, however, he discovers a potential source of cash in a copy of a heretofore worthless book by Ceausescu, titled in English on the cover, *The Future of Romania*. Wags are always referring to it as *The Fucking of Romania*, and its new value may be explained by the rumor that if you read it backward you can find the numbers of the dictator's Swiss accounts.

Meanwhile, Carolina wants to use the money for a sewing machine, have her baby and sell it to foreigners, with Stela's help. This drives Vasile increasingly mad, like the society around him. And as he breaks down, so does the



The Conjugal Bed

Directed by Mircea Daneliuc

White

Directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski

When the film resumes, he is in an asylum surrounded by inmates obsessed with Ceausescu.

Things get even more strange upon his return home, when Vasile discovers Stela acting in a porno movie being filmed in his bed. It's called *The Conjugal Bed*. Stop, he pleads with her, "Europe is watching us." This sense of being on probation, of starting out from a kind of ground zero to catch up with a world that shrugs you off, is at the heart of *The Conjugal Bed*. Daneliuc perfectly and chillingly captures the moral and psychological chaos of post-communist society, which looks increasingly like a bad parody of capitalist excess.

The Conjugal Bed even spells this out, with the hovering presence of Arnold Schwarzenegger on movie posters in

movie—literally. When Vasile is arrested, the film appears to twist in the projector, break and flutter to a stop,

replaced by a black

world of Polish import-export to exact a cunning revenge on her. Money makes all things possible now. "Need a corpse?" Karol's faithful driver asks. "We can buy one. These days you can buy anything."

The bleak joke in *White* is that the protagonist has worked out an elaborate plan—the end result of which will be to place himself back in poverty on the grimy streets of Warsaw. His money and enterprise ultimately win him exactly no change at all, except that he has managed to put the one thing he most desires in life in a prison where he can only blow kisses to her.

White is a droll exercise in Eastern European self-hatred, and as different in tone from *The Conjugal Bed* as it could possibly be. Kieslowski is muted and velvety, shrugging his shoulders at the folly of man. Daneliuc rants and raves, all hard edges, grubby images, outrageous metaphors and excoriating finger-pointing at the rush to degradation and dollars. Perhaps the difference is that Kieslowski is going home to Paris, while Daneliuc will sleep more uneasily in Bucharest. But both, however differently, see the mortal danger that stalks Eastern Europe.

Vasile's theater. In one memorable scene, Stela's afternoon quickie with Vasile on his desk is interrupted by a phone call. They continue nonetheless, Vasile brown-nosing the official on the phone, and Stela bringing herself to orgasm by concentrating on Arnold's stern visage on the wall beside her. Vasile is flabbergasted.

The anxiety of being a poor relation is more acute than ever in Eastern Europe, as illustrated not only in *The Conjugal Bed* but in Krzysztof Kieslowski's *White*. Kieslowski, an expatriate Pole who moved to France, made *White* as the second part of a trilogy based on the themes embodied in the colors of the French flag: liberty (1993's *Blue*), equality (*White*) and fraternity (the forthcoming *Red*). Like *The Conjugal Bed*, *White* uses sex as a metaphor for politics—though neither film is likely to provide comfort to feminists. In both, women are primarily symbols of the degradation of East European society or of the unattainable West.

I N P R I N T

Thinking for a living

By Scott McLemee

Long before the term "public intellectual" entered its current vogue, Edward Said exemplified the type, particularly in his tireless advocacy of Palestinian national sovereignty. Through his writings and appearances on *Nightline* and *The MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour*, Said's eloquence (combined with a somewhat tweedy appearance, redolent of '50s academia) put him far outside the media stereotype of the Arab radical. Much to the dismay of some: *Commentary* dubbed Said "the professor of terror." An uncompromising critic of Israeli policy, Said often claimed that he would be among the first gadflies any independent Palestinian regime would face—a promise he has been prompt in keeping, delivering spirited critiques, in the pages of *The Nation*, of Yasser Arafat's undemocratic tendencies and his penchant for excessive secrecy.

At the beginning of his career, Said's literary and political interests seemed distinct. This is no longer the case. In his work as a cultural critic, as with his advocacy of Palestinian rights, Said's definitive preoccupation has been with the politics of representation—the systems and habits of understanding. That sounds very abstract, and sometimes it is. But questions of representation can also be political, often in very direct ways. They concern who gets to speak and who is silenced, what gets taken seriously (and how, and why). Such questions are never far from Said's mind, whether he is discussing contemporary Israeli politics or the prose of Jonathan Swift—the crucial difference being, of course, that he does not get death threats in response to his literary criticism.

Said has been a prolific writer, but the demands of public

affairs have taken their toll on his output as a scholar. So, more recently, has illness. Said's new book, *Representations of the Intellectual*, seems something of a scaled-down version of a project he has been speaking of for some time. Back in 1986, in an interview with the journal *Critical Texts*, Said described two major works in progress. One, he explained, would be "a historical and political study of intellectuals in different traditions," the other a study of the cultural politics of imperialism. Said has completed the second task: the massive *Culture and Imperialism*, published last year, is a subtle reflection on the history and imagination of empire. Often brilliantly insightful, if loosely organized, the book meanders across cultural and disciplinary borders, exploring diverse literary and artistic traditions.

Representations of the Intellectual is a much thinner book. As with his recent collection of writings on Palestine, *The Politics of Dispossession*, Said's prose in *Representations* is simple, direct and forceful, unlike the sometimes oblique style of his literary criticism. While *Culture and Imperialism* develops its ideas gradually (with an abundance of examples, playing variations on a theme), *Representations* is compact and popularized. In part this reflects its origins: the chapters of the book were originally half-hour lectures delivered on BBC radio in 1993.

This is a book that gives the gist of ideas, rather than exploring their subtleties; it's hard to summarize without making the book look like a caricature. Said's argument, in brief, is that intellectuals should set themselves up as agents of social criticism and change, voices of the dispossessed—comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable, speaking "truth to power" and generally making trouble.

But most intellectuals, in fact, make precious little trouble. Within the global marketplace, brain-workers form a large and integral part of the workforce. Their skills are rewarded; comfort may numb their moral sensibilities. Furthermore, intellectuals are rooted in national cultures—sometimes the insurgent nationalisms of the Third World, sometimes the fat and happy establishments of the industrialized countries. This breeds complacency, if not cynicism. Even so, Said argues, intellectuals ought to do better—and would, if they had any self-respect. Their consciences should be guided by heroic examples, from Antonio Gramsci to Frantz Fanon.

Edward W. Said

Representations of the Intellectual



Representations of the Intellectual

By Edward Said
Pantheon

121 pp., \$20

LABAN



©1994 TERRY LABAN

Much of the book thus reads like a sermon. The prose at times verges on the platitudinous. "One of the shabbiest of all intellectual gambits is to pontificate about abuses in someone else's society and to excuse exactly the same practices in one's own," he writes. Try finding someone to dispute that! Nor is there much bite to Said's rhetorical questions: "How [should] the intellectual address authority: as a professional supplicant or as its unrewarded, amateurish conscience?" How indeed.

This sort of thing is simply embarrassing, and unfortunately there is quite a bit of it. But there are moments when the clichés fall away. Then one glimpses, all too briefly, the more interesting lines of thought that this volume summarizes but allows itself little room to explore. For *Representations of the Intellectual* has, as it were, the soul of a fat book trapped in the body of a thin one.

Consider the notion of "representation," for instance. Said's title is strategically ambiguous. He defines the intellectual as someone "with a vocation for the art of representing," whether in writing or in speech. The intellectual, in short, works with representations, just as a bricklayer works with bricks. But, Said also makes clear, the intellectual doesn't just represent for a living; he or she also *is* a representation before the public of certain values (the willingness to take risks in standing up for one's beliefs, for example). "Representation," as Said uses the term, describes both a tool and the essence of the intellectual; it bridges the distance

between self and social identity. It is a concept Said could, and should, meditate upon for hundreds of pages.

Said's speculations on the abstract issues of representation and intellectual commitment would be much more engaging if he were to turn his critical eye on the text of his own complex life and career as a Palestinian émigré and New York intellectual—to shed the professorial skin and take up autobiography.

Then again, that is precisely what he does in the most telling moment of *Representations*, while reflecting on exile as a condition thinkers should aspire to, if only in imagination. "For the intellectual an exilic displacement means being liberated from the usual career, in which 'doing well' and following in time-honored footsteps are the main milestones," Said writes. "Exile means that you are always going to be marginal, and that what you do as an intellectual has to be made up because you cannot follow a prescribed path. If you experience that fate not as deprivation and as something to be bewailed, but as a source of freedom, a process of discovery in which you do things according to your own pattern, as various interests seize your attention, and as the particular goal you set yourself dictates: that is a unique pleasure."

It is a pleasure he evidently knows well. And one that most intellectuals, unfortunately, are content never to experience.

Scott McLemee writes regularly on culture and politics for *In These Times*.

Bad debts

By Will Nixon

The World Bank has no corner branches, no ATMs distributing colorful foreign money, no TV ads with celebrities like Mikhail Gorbachev hawking home mortgage loans. Many Americans have no idea what the Bank is and what it does. But we may be almost alone in our naiveté. Created in 1944 to help countries rebuild after World War II, the Bank has become "the Vatican of development," in the words of author Bruce Rich, lending \$25 billion a year to more than 100 countries, providing the financial security for projects worth more than \$80 billion. The Bank is the ATM par excellence for dams, highways, coal plants, agricultural plantations and countless other grand development schemes. It is also, to cynics like Rich, an attorney for the Environmental Defense Fund, "a global political patronage machine without precedent in world history."

And the Bank operates in grand style. Every year the bankers and their clients meet, 10,000 to 15,000 strong, to splurge on \$200 dinners, make new deals on millions of dollars of foreign debt and fill the streets with their stretch limos. In 1991, Rich caught their show in Bangkok, Thailand, which he describes in wicked detail in *Mortgaging the Earth*, his critical account of the Bank's doings.

For this three-day bash, the Thais had built a \$100 million "gleaming, modernistic palace of concrete and glass," Rich reports, with a \$250,000 gold statue "vaguely resembling a burning bush" out front. To improve the view, the government bulldozed nearby slums and resettled some families in army tents under an expressway. To clear the streets to give the limos more room to maneuver, the Thais closed businesses in Bangkok for two days. The event required eight hospitals to be put on full medical alert. "All these meetings about money may create anxiety among delegates, many of whom are quite old," said one hospital

director. Luckily, Rich adds, "There was only one death: a Turkish banker inadvertently killed himself with a self-administered heroin overdose."

Bangkok is not—like, say, Las Vegas—an oasis of glitter and wealth. It is widely known as "the global brothel" partly due to World Bank-funded projects that have converted small peasant farms into large plantations, pushing the poor into the city and the women into the streets. Not that the world's financial elite had time to notice. They were wining and dining and listening to speeches by bank presidents reassuring them that their "ultimate objective" was "the reduction of poverty."

As Rich suggests, the Bank has long had two great flaws. Lacking "quality" projects to finance, the Bank has made many questionable loans. And so, sooner or later, "most countries start paying back more to the Bank than it lends." Over the years, the Bank has responded to these problems by helping to create development agencies within its client countries, thus in effect creating "continual World Bank borrowers" dependent on bigger and bigger loans to keep themselves and the Bank in business. By the '80s, however, the Bank had gotten neck-deep into some huge ecological and social disasters concocted by its client agencies.

In India, for example, the National Thermal Power Corp. received \$750 million for a vast energy project at Singrauli—an ecologically rich tropical forest providing homes for everything from bears and tigers to wild boar. But India wanted the huge coal fields under the forests. Over the years it has dug 12 huge open-pit mines and built five giant coal-fired plants. (Six more are in the planning stages.) The project has evicted 23,000 villagers, turned 70,000 miners into "semi-slaves" earning 65 to 80 cents a day, and polluted surrounding farmland and a reservoir with mercury and other chemicals, rendering fish and agricultural products unfit for human consumption. If the project is completed, Rich notes, it "will be one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions on earth."

It's hard to hide calamity on this scale. In the early '80s, environmentalists, human rights groups and Con-

**MORTGAGING
THE EARTH
THE WORLD BANK,
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPOVERISHMENT,
AND THE CRISIS
OF DEVELOPMENT
BRUCE RICH**

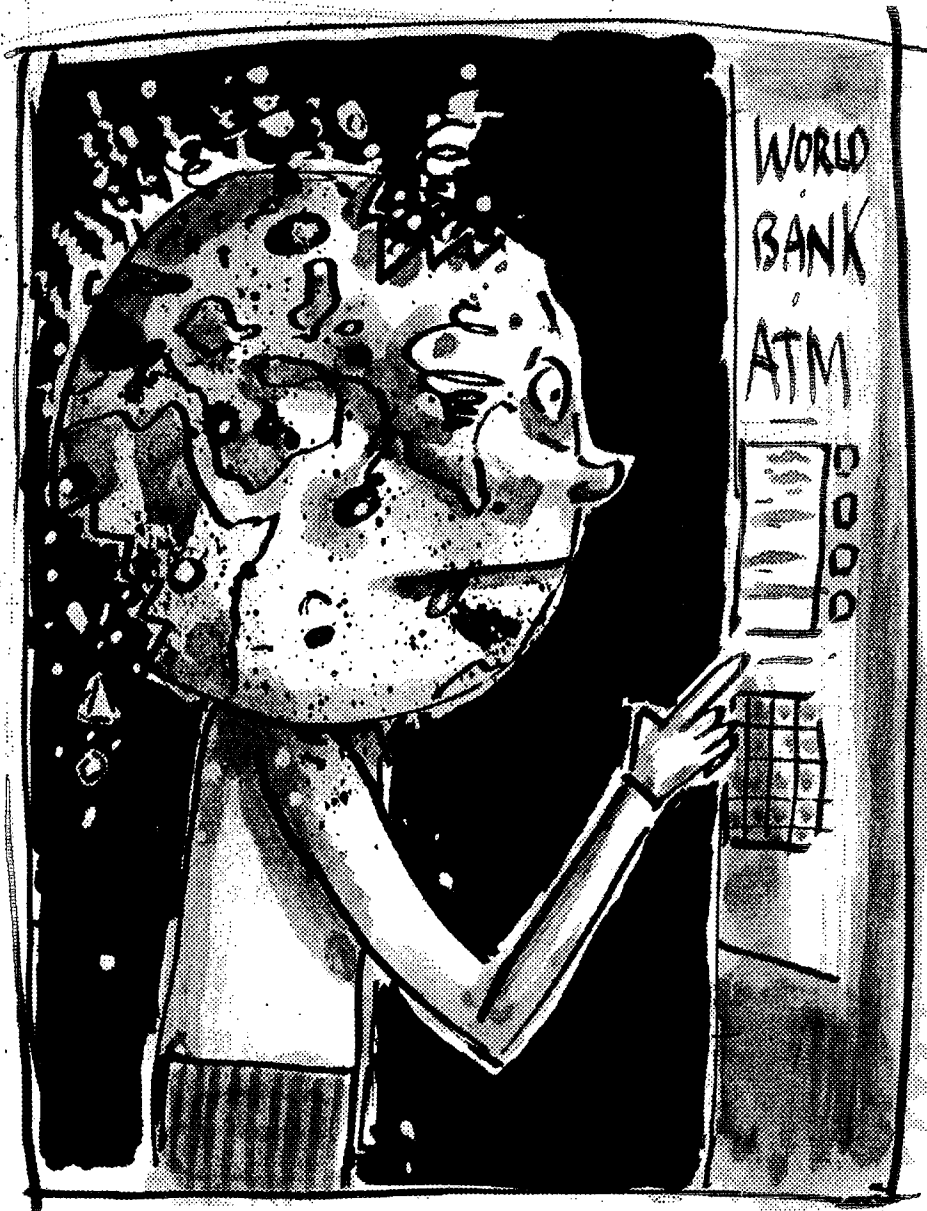
Mortgaging the Earth: The World Bank, Environmental Impoverishment, and the Crisis of Development

By Bruce Rich

Beacon Press

384 pp., \$29

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gress began prodding the Bank to reform its ways. (In 1983, the Bank had six people in its environmental department out of 3,500 professional employees.) Rich himself played a role in convincing the Bank to stop pouring money into the Polonoroeste project designed to help poor migrants settle the western Amazon. In the early '90s, an independent environmental assessment helped put an end to the Bank's support for the proposed Sardar Sarovar dam in India that would have displaced 240,000 people. India will now try to proceed with the monster on its own.

Yet, ironically, having forced the Bank to abandon its grand rainforest-eating projects of the past, environmentalists now face the Global Environment Facility (GEF) created by the Bank in 1990 to lend \$1.3 billion over a three-year trial run. "By late 1992, the GEF was well under way to

becoming the main international funding mechanism through which the international community is attempting to address global environmental problems such as climate change and destruction of biodiversity," Rich writes. But the GEF suffers from the Bank's usual maladies: hasty planning, secrecy, duplicity. One of the GEF's first loans—\$10 million to protect an untouched rainforest in the Congo—turned out to be greenwashing for another Bank loan designed to promote ... the logging industry.

Mortgaging the Earth is best when Rich engages in old-fashioned muckraking, helping to reveal the details of the Bank's arrogance, stupidity and hypocrisy. A damning detail doesn't go by that he doesn't catch—from the Bank's links to BCCI, the rogue international bank that stole billions from poor countries, to the Bank's embrace of Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania as a model customer.

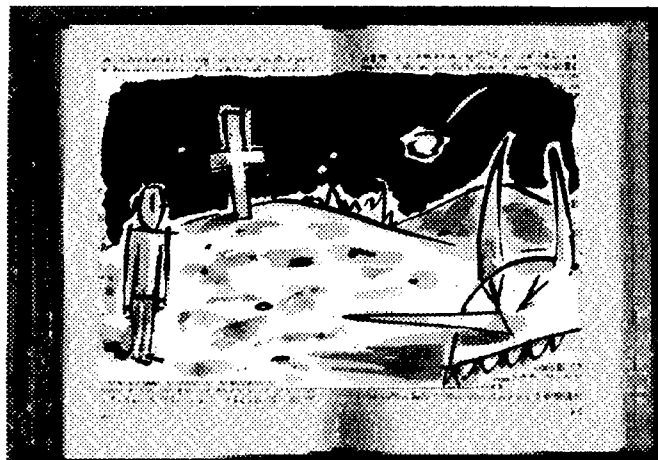
But Rich wants to be more than an investigative reporter; he aspires to become an intellectual critic as well, arguing that the true villain of this story is the idea of modernity itself, with its relentless worship of growth and progress. Rich sides with the doubters—taking as his model Max Weber, the German sociologist who at the turn of the century described the "iron cage" at

the heart of modern bureaucracy. To Rich, the Bank is Weber's beast come to life: secretive, rigidly hierarchical, ruled by an internal logic oblivious of the impact on people and ecosystems.

At times, Rich's intellectual riffing seems a substitute for a more detailed history of the Bank itself. And his vision of "an electronic polis" of environmentalists and public interest advocates "linked by lap-top computers, faxes and modems" seems a bit wistful. The World Bank's paradigm of global bureaucratic control is collapsing, but in many places it is losing to the feudal chaos of warlords and religious fanaticism. Still, *Mortgaging the Earth* is an invaluable book, full of fire over financial issues that many of us have too long ignored.

Will Nixon is associate editor of *E* magazine.

SPEED READING



Bless Me, Ultima
By Rudolfo Anaya
Warner Books
262 pp., \$5.50

Rudolfo Anaya published his now-classic novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*, in 1972, with the small, Berkeley-based Latino publisher, Quinto Sol. Since then, the book has gone through an astounding 21 printings, sold over 300,000 copies, and earned its author such accolades as the national Chicano literary award, the Premio Quinto Sol.

It seems somehow ironic, then, that Anaya should suddenly be “discovered” by one of New York’s biggest publishers, Warner Books, a Time-Warner subsidiary, and be signed for six titles with all the drum banging and horn tooting appropriate to such an occasion. Now that Latino literature has suddenly appeared like a comet on our cultural horizon, with such authors as Sandra Cisneros, Luis Rodriguez and Cristina Garcia on the bestseller lists, Anaya has become a hot property. But for once we should be grateful for publishing industry opportunism.

Bless Me, Ultima is simply one of the great works of postwar North American literature, in any genre, and its potential introduction to the wider community is worthy of celebration. The novel tells the story of a young boy, Tony, whose life changes forever when Ultima, an aging *Curandera*, or healer, comes to live with his family in their home outside a small town in New Mexico. Over the next several years, Tony grows up in the shadow of Ultima, whose spirit is the wildness of the land itself. He wanders the hills of the countryside with her, learning the secrets of the earth. Tony battles witches and spirits and stones from the sky; witnesses murder, hatred and the fruit of a relentless, poisonous restlessness instilled by rapidly changing times; and wrestles with the contradictions between what he learns from the village priest—of heaven and hell and the sole possibility of

redemption in the bosom of the Church—and his knowledge of a wider, less explicable world. *Bless Me, Ultima* is not only fiction at its finest; it’s a breathtaking distillation of the beauty and terror of life itself.

—Chris Faatz

A Rage to Punish: The Unintended Consequences of Mandatory Sentencing

By Lois G. Forer
W.W. Norton and Company
204 pp., \$23.00

Many opponents of the death penalty believe that the practice is so inherently barbaric that ordinary citizens need only be reminded of the brute facts so as to turn them against it. Such assumptions ring hollow, however, in light of statistics that show Americans saying “yes” to the death penalty in increasing numbers. Since the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1977, the criminal justice system has become less and less associated in the public mind with justice and more with revenge. Mandatory sentencing laws—“three-strikes-you’re-out” provisions and the like—increasingly replace judges’ “wisdom” in evaluating a criminal’s potential for rehabilitation, while discussions of prevention degenerate into pointless debates over “midnight basketball.” And crime rates remain stubbornly high. “More persons are behind bars in the United States than in any other country in the world, and the figures escalate every year,” writes former Pennsylvania trial judge Lois Forer in *A Rage to Punish*. “One must ask why Americans and their elected representatives believe that punishment is moral, what justification there is for laws that do not reduce crime but cost billions of dollars each year.”

Mandatory sentencing laws have been in effect in some states since the ’50s. Initially the laws were intended to eliminate racial and class disparities within the system, to make sure that everyone had to face the same penalties for the same acts. But because the criminal justice system regards street crime and drugs as somehow more sinful than white-collar crime, these discrepancies continue. Racial and class tensions only increase with mandatory sentencing, since white-collar criminals (Oliver North, for example) are still able to negotiate the system—making it obvious to all that crime does pay, if you’re playing with big enough stakes.

In *A Rage to Punish*, Forer—who chose to leave the bench in 1988 instead of sentencing a man to five years in jail under the mandatory sentencing laws—argues that mandatory sentences are not effective in protecting society but are rather designed to exact moral retribution. Forer, wary of solutions that reek of more of the same, argues that law is not (and should not be seen as) the primary means of crime control. And neither should it be an excuse for indulging collective fantasies of revenge.

—Anastasia McRae

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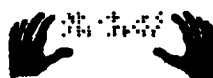
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Continued from page 40

tion came from the loose-knit bunch of kids at my school who were into hip-hop. For the first year or so, most of my break dancing and graffiti partners were white, Mexican or Puerto Rican. By ninth grade, when break dancing died and most of my white friends, after one or two arrests, had abandoned hip-hop and graffiti for drugs and skateboarding—activities I found dull in comparison—I immersed myself deeper into the citywide family of graffiti writers, rappers, dancers, DJs and delinquents.

Imagine what an adventure it was for a 13-year-old upper-middle-class white kid with over-protective parents to steal and stash cases of spray paint, sneak out at night, run from the cops, dodge trains in subway tunnels, walk alone through the projects and commit other crimes for which the statute of limitations has not yet passed. And on top of that, to be accepted by all but the bitterest of blacks. I was almost instantly and undeservingly made welcome.

One day, the coach of my nearly all-black Little League team arranged for our rag-tag crew to scrimmage against a well-trained white suburban team. Warming up, I remember feeling proud to be the only white boy on this black team, and felt certain that our raw city talent would prevail. Within a few innings, we lost by slaughter rule. It was then that I realized for the first time in no uncertain terms that black people did not rule the world.

And so one extreme view had to be tempered with an opposite but equally extreme view: blacks are stupider than whites. I don't recall the first time I thought that—probably pretty early on, and oftentimes I still imagine pseudo-scientifically that it is true. Usually it is based on an observed instance of black stupidity, but I could pretty much rationalize it out of thin air. I am unable to imagine equality, unable to love blacks without simultaneously hating them. The same mind that believes a dumb black dude has the potential of an Einstein has to be restrained from shouting "nigger" when it goes to see a brilliant black scholar give a lecture. It is with this schizophrenic mind that I, and to some degree all, Americans try to forge for ourselves a sensible opinion on race. Usually it doesn't work. One of my first racial causes—imagine this!—was to dismantle black people's stereotypes of *me*.

At age 14, I changed my graffiti name to Jew 2 and began wearing a Star of David medallion. Jews had been oppressed too, hadn't we? And wasn't Israel right next to Africa? My short experiment in contrived chauvinism (being a Jew was not, after all, a big part of my daily life) ended one day after gym class in my high school locker room. I had transferred from the Lab School to the predominantly black Kenwood Academy, a public magnet school, and I was on friendly, if adversarial, terms with Abnar Farrakhan (son of Minister Louis Farrakhan), one of the coolest, toughest and most intelligent kids at Kenwood. One day Abnar started talking shit about Jews, basically to get a rise out of me. I called him nigger, basically to get a rise out of his father that night at the dinner table. We got in each other's face and he body-slammed me.

I was so preoccupied with my own experiences that it took a long time to notice some basic insights about how black people


see the world. Not that they think as a group, but there are patterns. Where once I found black behavior offensive, I finally began to see that it was in fact *defensive*. This insight was corroborated from another angle when I went to hear Abnar's dad, Minister Farrakhan, give a public speech at the Nation of Islam National Center on 73rd and Stony Island. In a crowd of maybe 20,000, I was one of only five or ten whites. While the people sitting next to me cheered furiously when Farrakhan spoke against the white man, more than one of them—the very same people—made it a point to be friendly to me, shake my hand, and call me "brother." And because I had to leave before the end, the Fruit of Islam security guard who escorted me to the door put his arm around me and asked me how I liked the speech. For his part, Farrakhan is actually a moderating force in American race relations. A lot of people are ready to hear something far more extremist than what he's actually saying. We ought to thank our lucky stars he isn't calling for an all-out race war Long Island Rail Road-style.

In general, black aggression toward whites is not so much about hating whiteness as it is a reaction and an attempt to overcome the humiliation we continue to heap on them. As with any relationship, people need to be met on their own turf, understood on their own terms and respected for who they are and what they have to offer. Simply because I went alone to hear Minister Farrakhan, because I was in a black neighborhood, because I took the bus, listened carefully, and clapped when I agreed with him, it seemed to make the people sitting around me think I was pretty okay. Had I gone to see Farrakhan as part of a group, or waited until he was speaking downtown or on a college campus, no doubt I would have been received differently.

But anyone who thinks there is some kind of secret formula to manipulate and get accepted by blacks is sure to be disappointed. Black people will see through you and, more than likely, they'll snicker about you later, or call your bluff outright if they're feeling courageous—oftentimes, when you are most convinced of your own sincerity. Earning the trust of a wide range of blacks—not just the friendly and servile ones—means turning your world upside down.

Just because I have gone further than most whites does not mean I belong to some special category, deserving to be judged as anything other than the white boy I am. In a land that James Baldwin once described as "dedicated to the death of the paradox," we remain at war with life's indivisible contradictions, unappreciative of their richness.

"I'm confused about what your point of view is," an editor of mine once said. "I can't tell from reading this whether you are a hip-hopper or a racist, an insider in black society or some kind of outside sociologist. Do you like black people or do you hate them?" My answer is that I'm human, meaning that I'm complex enough to be all of these things at once.

If only black people could get away with that. 

William Upski Wimsatt is the author of *Bomb the Suburbs: Graffiti, Freight-Hopping, Race and the Search for Hip-Hop's Moral Center*, from which this essay was adapted. The book is available for \$7 from The Subway and Elevated Press, P.O. Box 377653, Chicago, IL 60637.

IN DEFENSE OF WIGGERS

By William Upski Wimsatt

The Oprah people were on the phone with my mom. Someone had given them my name as an expert on wiggers. You know, wiggers. White kids scorned by their peers for listening to rap. I was an expert on that. My mother and I were glad to hear I was an expert on something. My 1993 article on wiggers for *The Source* magazine had become the most responded to article in the history of hip-hop journalism. The Oprah guy was asking me questions, trying to size me up.

Oh, I'm not trying to ridicule wiggers, I told him. Merely to describe them would accomplish that. The very things that I hate most about The Wigger—his stupid audacity and perverted desire (deeply held and deeply denied) to be *down* with black people—these character defects are a cause for celebration. If channeled in the right way, the Wigger can go a long way toward repairing the sickness of race in America.

The Oprah guy thought about this for a moment, then he came straight to the point. "We're trying to pick white hip-hop fans for the panel," he said. "How do you dress?"

How do I dress? "Yeah, you know ... are your pants eight sizes too big?"

I didn't make the panel.

My own thoughts about race started pretty naively. Not that anyone would have thought to ask, but for moments in my early life I must have been under the impression that black people ruled the Earth. I owed this inverted world-view to two contradictory sources.

One of these was the fashionable University of Chicago Laboratory School where I was sent starting at age two. Although the school is more than 60 percent white and located in the whitest section of the Hyde Park neighborhood, it has long been a school of choice for Chicago's black bourgeoisie.

The Johnson Publishing family, the Burrell Advertising family and University of Chicago sociologist William Julius Wilson all sent their kids to the Lab

School. Many of the first blacks I encountered were richer than I was.

Hyde Park, where I grew up, is not all rich, though. And it's surrounded by Woodlawn, Grand Boulevard, Washington Park and North Kenwood. These are some of the most messed-up black neighborhoods in the city—places so rocked that many residents didn't know their neighborhoods *had* names. These were the birthplaces of Chicago's rival black street gangs and the stomping grounds of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. Before I understood the abstract power of money, politics and prestige, I understood the power of I-could-get-my-ass-kicked.

My early experience with race was more immediate than that of most whites, but the patterns were about the same. Blacks most likely to enter the white world tend to be from the socioeconomic extremes rather than the vast middle. Between the assimilated blacks I met at school and the aggressive ones I avoided on the street, it became easy to imagine that blacks were the ones who had it good in America. This is more than just a harmless childhood fantasy of mine. It is a common, if usually unspoken, belief among whites.

It was their veneer of power, rather than their underlying powerlessness, that attracted me to blacks. I was drawn by admiration rather than pity. I had always had delinquent tendencies, and who could symbolize my wild side better than the bands of boisterous black boys I feared?

Of course, romanticizing blacks was also a way to elevate myself. If blacks were the superior race, then by association, I too was superior. This conceit, shared by all wiggers, is founded on (what seems to us) our rare ability to mingle with blacks whom other whites find inaccessible. In fact, we flatter ourselves; fitting in requires no uncommon talent. The main reason more whites don't become wiggers—instead of just white rap fans—is that getting down with blacks, like any relationship, requires that precious, ego-endangering resource: effort.

Effort is why the white b-boy, the wigger—rather than the white liberal or the white missionary—is at the center of my attention. The white liberal is a worthless frustration to black efforts; he has never put any skin on the line and he never will. The white missionary has guts, but he also has his own agenda, whether religious or ideological. The white b-boy, at his best, avoids the drawbacks of both. He

has the zeal of the missionary, but he lacks a firm agenda. He knows blacks first as people, not as issues.

I didn't infiltrate black society instantly. Much of my initial

Continued on page 39



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IN THE END